

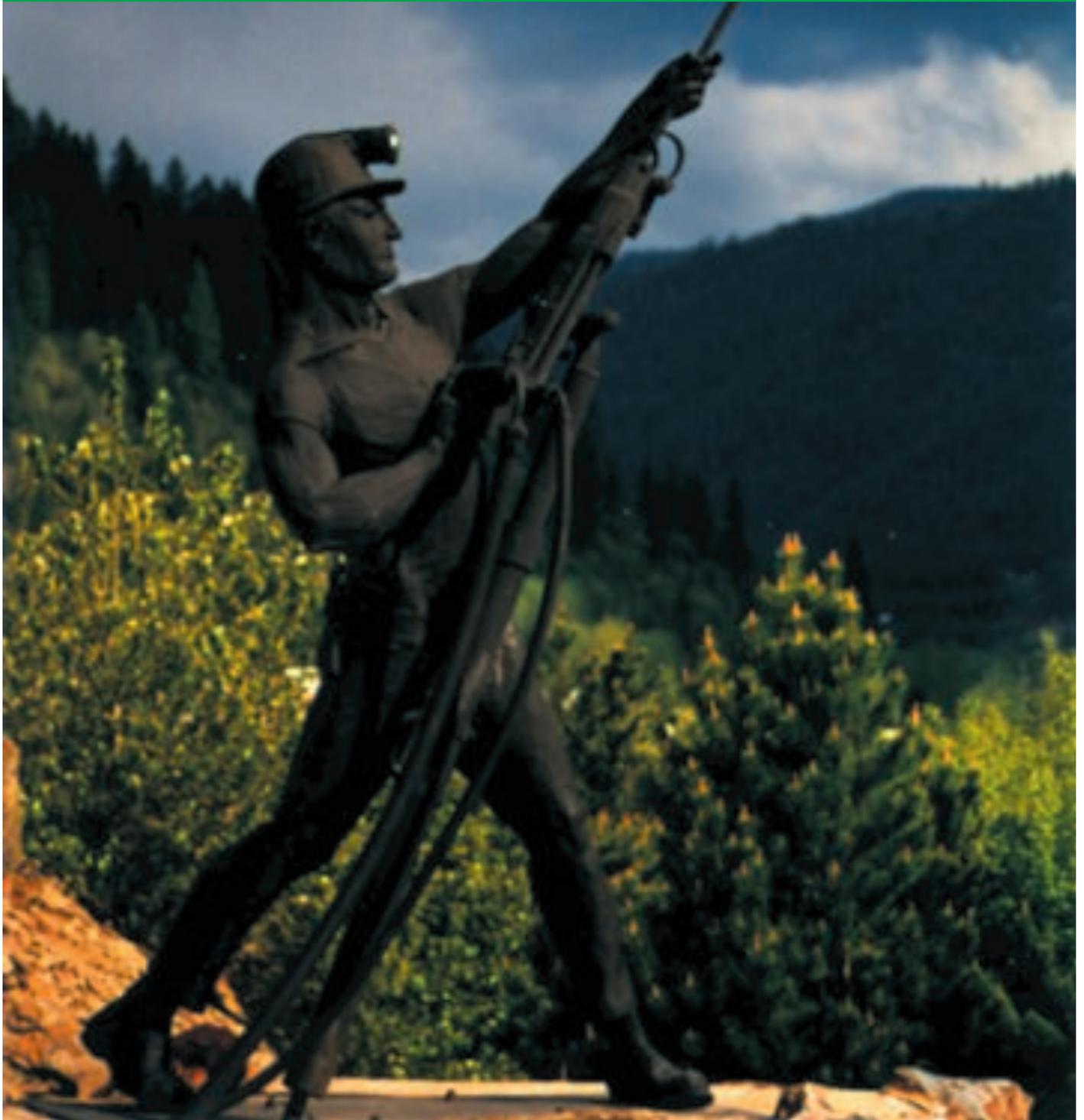


INLAND EMPIRE PUBLIC LANDS COUNCIL

TRANSITIONS

Working for Sustainable Forests and Diversified Economies in America's Pacific Northwest

Volume 9, Number 3, May/June 1996



Memorial to 91 miners who died in Idaho's Sunshine Mine disaster.

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TRANSITIONS

Journal of the IEPLC

The Inland Empire Public Lands Council is a non-profit organization dedicated to the transition of the greater Columbia River ecosystem from resource extraction to long term community and biological sustainability.

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Derrick Jensen - Associate Editor
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Mailing Address: IEPLC, P.O. Box 2174 • Spokane, WA 99210
Office: S. 517 Division • Spokane, WA 99202 • Phone: (509) 838-4912 • Fax: (509) 838-5155
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ERRATA [*Transitions: Get the Lead Out!* March/April, 1996] Page 3. The following is an editing error: "The value of the minerals taken from the region is estimated at more than one trillion dollars." The actual value of minerals from the Coeur d'Alene Mining District has been estimated at \$4.8 billion. [Compiled by D.C. Springer-Osburn, Idaho, provided by Coeur d'Alene Mining District Museum-Wallace, Idaho.]

Page 10-11. The source for these data is the Environmental Working Group, Washington, D.C.-based public interest organization.

Economic Transition and the Labor Question

By John Osborn, M.D.

The complex relationship between workers, owners, and government manifests itself most starkly in places and times of difficult economic transition such as this region today, such as this region a century ago.

Constructing the transcontinental railroads after the Civil War employed thousands of workers. After the tracks were built thousands of workers lost their jobs. EuroAmericans found themselves pitted against Chinese for scarce jobs, often leading to vigilante violence.

Desperation sparked class consciousness. Workers began to organize. The Knights of Labor, formed in 1869, included over 700,000 members by 1886 but thereafter rapidly declined because of anti-Chinese activities. Disturbed by the Knights' approach, trade unionists led by Samuel Gompers formed the American Federation of Labor (AFL) in 1886, and coal miners formed the United Mine Workers in 1890. Miners conceived of the Federation of Miners (WFM) in 1892 while under arrest in northern Idaho. In 1905 some unions and political parties formed the radical Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W. or "Wobblies").

At times the labor question erupted into violence such as the mining wars in the Coeur d'Alenes. In 1892 miners responded to mine owners' efforts to break the union by blowing up the Frisco Mill near Wallace, Idaho. In 1899 miners became frustrated by persistent refusals to pay union wages. They commandeered a train nicknamed the "Dynamite Express," and 2000 miners headed for the Bunker Hill and Sullivan concentrator, took it over, and blew it up in the "Second Battle of Bunker Hill." Idaho governor and former union member, Frank Steunenberg, ordered federal troops against the miners.

Steunenberg was assassinated in 1905 outside his home in Caldwell, Idaho. Assassin Harry Orchard implicated three labor leaders including "Big Bill" Haywood. The three were kidnapped in Denver and stood trial in Boise. In the Pacific Northwest's most famous trial, then-senator William Borah was the prosecuting attorney and Clarence Darrow argued for the defense. Darrow prevailed. Haywood, acquitted, went on to lead the Wobblies and eventually fled the country in 1918. Today Steunenberg's statue faces the capitol building in Boise, Idaho reminding us of historic and tragic events — and the labor question.

Governments reacted to labor activists, in part, by

passing laws that restricted rights of citizens to speak, meet, and organize. Wobblies engaged in about 20 "Free Speech" battles between 1909 and 1913. Perhaps the most famous occurred in Spokane. On November 2, 1909, the Wobblies declared "Free Speech Day" in Spokane and took to the streets violating a newly passed city ordinance restricting street meetings. Wobblies were arrested by the hundreds. One Wobbly leader, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, chained herself to a lamppost as suffragettes were doing in London. Hundreds of Wobblies filled Spokane jails where several died under brutal conditions. City authorities and the I.W.W. reached a settlement on March 4, 1910.

In September 1917 the federal government arrested and then imprisoned over a hundred Wobbly leaders. The U.S. Army, preparing for WWI, created an official company union called the "4L" (Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen) that broke the Wobblies' efforts to organize timber workers. The I.W.W. was supplanted by the AFL.

Workers far more often suffered violence than perpetrated it, especially considering on-the-job injuries and deaths. During 1909-1910 a series of fires and explosions killed hundreds of miners in Colorado and Illinois, adding to the clamor for labor reform. In 1972, 91 miners died at the Sunshine Mine in the Coeur d'Alenes, the nation's worst mine disaster since 1917. Today a miner's statue reminds us of that horrible disaster — and the labor question.

Prompted by the cumulative pressure from industrial disasters and terrible loss of life, injustice, marches and strikes, and even pitched battles and riots Congress and Legislatures eventually established labor bureaus and enacted labor reforms: worker compensation laws, worker health and safety laws, the 40 hour work-week and 8-hour work-day, rights of workers to form unions, and minimum wage laws.

The labor question was prompted by the economic transition in the decades after the Civil War, a transition marked by the widening gulf between rich and poor, between management and workers. Today another economic transition is underway: Pacific Northwest forests are overcut and corporations are shifting capital to new timber frontiers around the world. Then as now, the "labor question" in our communities ought not go unasked and unanswered.

Mining Wars

BUTTE MINERS, OUT, IN UGLY MOOD

More Than a Thousand Surround Workings of Gagnon.

BUTTE, Mont., Sept. 24. — Mobs of more than a thousand miners surrounded the Gagnon mine tonight, apparently with the view of mobbing the miners there when they came to the surface.

It developed that 28 of the Gagnon miners refused to obey the order of the miners' union to quit work. They were rescued from the mob by policemen, who cleared a way through the mob to the miners' hall, where a committee from the miners' union inter-

viewed the men.

What transpired is not known, as the patrolmen, with guns ready for action, would permit no one to enter the building. In a few minutes Acting President Robert Crane of the miners' union appeared in a window and, addressing the people in the street below, advised the miners to disperse and meet again at the city auditorium at 8 o'clock this evening.

Spokesman Review

September 25, 1909

Mining Wars spawned powerful labor movement

By Michael Crater
of the Tribune

No miners were in the White House when President Benjamin Harrison's signature made Idaho a state on July 3, 1890. But had he known the future, he might have extended an invitation. Within two years, he'd be extending federal troops instead.

In 1892 and again in 1899, the miners of northern Idaho became armies of rebellion using sabotage and outright warfare in a new kind of militant unionism. When the second outburst was shattered, its partisans spread out to fan the fires in Utah and Colorado.

Harry Orchard, who first touched flame to an illicit fuse in Idaho in 1899, became labor's deadliest dynamite man until 1905. The seeds of the Western Federation of Miners and the Industrial Workers of the World ("Wobblies") were sown here.

Idaho's miners were of a different sort than most miners before them. They generally were not born of miners, as in the old mining regions of the East and of Europe. Instead, many of them or their parents had been pioneers, farmers, mountaineers or entrepreneurs—independent people who were nobody's underlings. They came West to be prospectors and ended up earning wages by the hour.

At \$3.50 for a 10-hour day, wages weren't great for the dangerous work down under the earth 100 years ago. When the price of silver fell and the freight rates rose in 1892, the Mine Owners Association demanded wage rollbacks. The miners refused and the mines were closed Jan. 16, 1892.

Two months later, the railroads backed down on the rate hike, and the owners offered to reopen the mines, but at the lower wages. The miners refused again. The owners replied with a trainload of non-union "scab" workers mostly from Montana and the Plains states.

The first batch arrived at Burke in April of 1892, but the townspeople massed together and threw them out.

To protect a second trainload of non-union workers, the mine owners recruited a force of 54 guards from Lewiston, Genesee and Moscow. The guards carried weapons and a federal court injunction against union interference.

The union men met the train and local police, who were generally sympathetic to the unions, arrested the chief guard. The remaining guards fled, but they and the imported workers soon returned, and by June there were about 300 at work where 4,000 union miners had been.

Fights between the union and non-union workers continued. Idaho Gov. Norman B. Willey, a mine superintendent by

Continued on page 6

Continued from previous page

calculated to disrupt their illegal organization and put them out of business could not be conceived. And yet these very men always respected him, and with but a single exception made no attempt to do him bodily violence. They appreciated his sincerity, his unflinching courage, his human sympathy, and above all his devotion to the laws of the country.

When Dr. France Became Sheriff.

My first meeting with Dr. France was at Wardner just after the destruction of the Bunker Hill and Sullivan mill, by the horde of dynamiters in control of the region at that time. Upon receipt of the shocking news of the murders and outrages on that occasion, the late governor, Steunenberg, then in Boise, requested me to visit the scenes and do what I could to restore order and secure proper punishment of the guilty ones. As I left him on a sick bed his last words were: "See Dr. France and Frank Johnson." Governor Steunenberg had faith in their judgment in the grievous affair, and I afterwards learned it was safe at all times in all subsequent emergencies to accept their views. Danger had no terrors for either.

Had Sympathy for Erring Men.

I saw Dr. France as soon as I arrived at Wardner and spent the entire night listening to the tale of horrible events leading up to the final blow upon the name and reputation of the state. He knew the men and their criminal ways. As he recited one after another of the outrages it sounded like the tragedy of books. Yet there was the evidence, all over the region — of public and private record.

Throughout the whole narration of bloodshed and crime he manifested the utmost sympathy for the miners and blamed condition rather than perversity of hearts. While he expressed his hatred of their crimes and he never forgot that they were human beings, he uttered than a pathetic belief that with the removal of the causes and the means, for the commission of crimes the Coeur d'Alene miners would become as law abiding as any of our people. He lived to see the truth of this and rejoiced in it.

Removal of Sheriff Young.

At this time Dr. France was coroner of Shoshone county. Ed Young was sheriff of the county. Young's inefficiency and cowardice seemed to make it imperative, in order to accomplish results, that he be deposed. I made this clear to him, but he refused to act. The law provides that the coroner shall become sheriff when that office is vacant. Dr. France, therefore, was duly sworn in as sheriff and henceforward till martial law was terminated in the Coeur d'Alenes was my fearless and trusted colleague.

The dynamiters realized in an incredibly short time that the state had become finally master of the situation and meant business. They saw that the political futures which had so often intervened to frustrate the efforts of the law were not counting for much. This condition was equally clear to the affrighted law and order people, all of whom had returned from across the

mountains to their firesides.

I now found a new difficulty. Up to this time I had, with the able assistance of Dr. France, bent every nerve to capture all the criminals who had had part or parcel in the crimes. Gathering courage from this course, the law and order men demanded and sought speedy vengeance upon their enemies.

It was here that Dr. France stepped in and counseled and enforced restraint. He had unbounded influence with this latter class of good citizens, burning as they were under the remembrance of past indignities, and through him more than any one else another class of crimes was prevented.

No Feeling of Resentment.

In all he did in those most vexatious times Dr. France had no feeling of resentment or unkindness for the lawbreakers. He often told me he was ready to take any chance in order to establish the same orderly conditions in the Coeur d'Alenes that prevailed elsewhere in Idaho. That was his home and he loved it. I do not think he knew what personal fears was, and his moral courage was sublime.

Favorite of the Prisoners.

His kindness and solicitude for the prisoners confined in the Wardner jail often brought him into the most violent conflict, with the state guards and keepers. His profound knowledge of medicine and sanitation in this respect made his supervision of this department of martial law government indispensable. The inmates of the prison all seemed to like him and he was always civil and most respectful to them. It was a source of great pain to Dr. France, whose nature was most sensitive, to hear the tales of cruelty about the prison and hospital administration, as they were manufactured and sent broadcast. As soon as I had discovered that these stories were the necessary incident of the state's interference, I urged him to pay no attention to them, as I had ceased to do from the first, but even though he realized the public took no stock in them and that they were repeated for political effect, their repetition continued offensive to him.

Most Companionable Man.

Personally Dr. France was a most companionable man. His affections were comprehensive and well placed. His medical and surgical skill should place him amongst the foremost of his professional associates of the northwest. As director of our two leading state hospitals, at Wardner and Wallace he had great success. But I think with Dr. France as with his friend and admirer Governor Steunenberg it is as a friend and advocate of law and order the state is his greatest debtor.

Spokesman Review
October 31, 1909

Continued from page 4

profession, threatened to impose martial law on the Coeur d'Alene district, and late in June 1892 he asked for federal troops. President Benjamin Harrison chose July 4, 1892, to refuse the request, not seeing evidence of an insurrection to justify it.

Two days later and far from the Coeur d'Alene district, steelworkers at Pittsburgh, Pa. formed a private army to combat an army of Pinkerton guards the steel magnates had hired against them. The workers seized the steel mills from the Pinkertons, setting a splendid example the Idaho miners didn't ignore.

Then a dirty subterfuge surfaced: On July 9, the secretary of the Coeur d'Alene miners union was exposed as a Pinkerton spy. After crawling out of the town of Gem beneath its boardwalks, Charlie Siringo fled through the mountains to Montana. The moderate members of the union allied with him were thrown into disrepute and disarray, and the rank and file began gathering like a storm cloud at Gem.

On July 11, 1892, they dynamited the Frisco mill, which was not then in use, and took captive the non-union crew of the nearby Burke mine. They then swept through the district, capturing mills and mines, running nonunion workers out of all the towns and eventually forcing the employers to quit hiring them.

The sweep met some resistance, particularly at Gem, where mine guards opened fire after a non-union worker was killed during a shift change. Townspeople were evacuated to Wallace while gunfire crackled around town. Three union men were killed.

But the union men outgunned the non-union workers and the small contingent of guards, and the mine owners knew the unions could destroy their property with ease. Late in the afternoon of July 11, 1892, representatives of the owners signed an unprecedented agreement with representatives of "the parties engaged in hostilities against the employees of the Gem mine" - the unionists. The agreement let the imported workers leave peacefully.

The union men set charges under the Bunker Hill plant and forced the company to get rid of the non-union workers or have it blown up. They also seized all the confiscated weaponry from the sheriff.

Now Harrison sent troops. About 500 were stationed at Wardner and as many more in various places from Burke to Wallace. They were commanded by Col. J.F. Curtis, a deputy to Gov. Willey. The troops deposed the sheriff, a union sympathizer, and threw about 400 miners—virtually any man they could catch—into America's first bull pen at Wallace.

Curtis brought the mines under what was essentially military control. No miner could work without a permit, and in order to get a permit had to renounce union membership and promise never to join a union again.

Although local juries refused to convict any miners, 25 were taken to Boise and 16 to Coeur d'Alene to be charged in federal

court with disobeying the injunction. The power of the unions was destroyed as surely as the Frisco mill had been.

The mine owners' victory was deceptive. While sitting in prison on charges later overturned on appeal, the Coeur d'Alene miners began the organizing that would lead to the formation of the Western Federation of Miners and eventually to the second war in the Coeur d'Alene Mining District.

The Western Federation of Miners was created at Butte, Mont., on May 19, 1893, and quickly began making its influence felt in the Coeur d'Alenes, as well as in the burgeoning mining camps of Colorado. Conditions for organizing were good—wages had not risen with profits, safety was still a low priority, the permit system kept moderates out of the unions and there was no job security.

Unionization again swept the district. In 1897, fiery organizer Edward Boyce called for union men to arm themselves "so that in two years we can hear the inspiring music of the martial tread of 25,000 armed men in the ranks of labor."

That goal wasn't quite achieved, but by 1899 only the Bunker Hill and Sullivan Co. was still non-union. Its wages were lower than the union shops. In April 1899, the union decided to organize the company and also demanded a pay raise to prevailing rates. The company refused to allow the unionization, but raised the pay.

It also raised an army. The army was restricted somewhat by Shoshone County Sheriff James D. Young, a unionist and Populist, and miner sympathizers in the county courthouse, but it was a force to be reckoned with nonetheless.

The miners made their move April 29, 1899, seizing a train at Burke and loading it with some 400 miners, most armed and masked. They took it to Frisco and broke into a warehouse for a supply of dynamite, called "giant powder." They next went to Gem for another 200 or so miners. Then it was decided the 40 cases of dynamite on hand might prove inadequate, so the miners' train rolled back to Frisco for more. With a total of 90 cases of powder and some 600 men aboard, the train highballed to Wallace.

There another 600 miners, mostly from Mullan, piled aboard the train, content to sit atop the boxcars. Sheriff Young and a deputy got on, too, and most of the townspeople crowded around to cheer as the train set out for the Bunker Hill and Sullivan ore concentrator at Wardner.

A tramp miner named Harry Orchard was aboard that train. Years later he would tell historian Stewart H. Holbrook, "It all seemed like a gigantic picnic, or a Fourth of July celebration. I doubt that many of us that day thought we were breaking the law by stealing a train and forcing its crew to run us where we wanted to go, regardless of other trains. I had a loaded revolver in my pocket, like hundreds of others, but I never thought for a moment that we were doing anything except the proper and natural thing."

The picnic turned strange quickly after reaching Wardner. The union gang believed the owners had left guards in the mine, so after ignoring a pro-forma order to disperse from sympa-

thetic Sheriff Young, they sent out a group of scouts.

The main force of miners delayed, then set out behind the scouts. The scouts discovered there were no guards, fired a shot to signal the information back to the commander of the action, W.F. Davis of Gem, and were promptly enveloped with gunfire by the main force. One scout was killed. The army of miners flushed a guard, Jim Cheyne, who was shot in the confusion.

Meanwhile, Orchard and 89 others each shouldered a 50-pound case of giant powder and carried them the half-mile from the train to the concentrator. They were distributed and wired with differing fuses so they'd go off in a top-to-bottom sequence ending with a "lifter" charge in the boiler room at the bottom.

Orchard and another man volunteered to light this charge and were nearly killed when the boiler room door latched against them. But they made their way out a window and watched the blast.

The union men went wild when the explosion, heard 15 miles away at Wallace, reduced the nation's largest concentrator to the nation's largest rubbish heap. They burned remaining company buildings and the mine foreman's home.

The next day, most "boomer" miners — the single men who drifted from camp to camp as whimsy led them — left the district as federal troops came in.

The troops this time were called by Gov. Frank Steunenberg. Although he was a Democrat-Populist believed to side with the unions, Steunenberg couldn't abide the lawlessness of the Coeur d'Alenes. His own National Guard was fighting in the Philippines, so he wired for help from President William McKinley, who sent Brigadier Gen. H.C. Merriam from Denver. He and Bartlett Sinclair, representing the governor, declared martial law in the Coeur d'Alenes for the second time on

May 2, 1899.

The next day a trainload of federal troops from Spokane, Walla Walla and Boise arrived in the Coeur d'Alene district, rounded up as many miners as they could find and threw them into bull pens at Burke, Wallace and the ruins of Wardner.

Merriam commanded a force rumored at 5,000 but actually smaller than 700. They held as many as 700 miners, but freed about half as Merriam complained about conditions in the bull pens. Most of the rest escaped after an officer was bribed at the Wardner bull pen. The few leaders — including Paul Corcoran of Burke — were prosecuted. Corcoran was convicted of being an accessory in the death of the guard, Jim Cheyne, and sentenced to 17 years in prison; he served two before receiving a pardon.

Gov. Steunenberg lost re-election in 1900, partly because of statewide anger over the permit system in the Coeur d'Alenes. The new governor, Frank W. Hunt, ended martial law in the Coeur d'Alene district April 11, 1901.

Again the mine owners and their allies in government had won an apparent victory. The vast majority of the area's 1,500 union miners had fled, a few were behind bars. The work permit system stood intact and the Idaho stronghold of the Western Federation of Miners was in shambles.

But those miners who fled carried bitterness and militant ideas with them. Many were to become the leaders of the violent unions of the Cripple Creek district of Colorado and of the Wobblies, the Industrial Workers of the World.

Seen in the light of history, the Idaho mine wars were neither more nor less than the noisy labor pains of the birth of militant unionism in the Northwest. The wild joyride on the stolen train was but the first leg of a larger journey.

Lewiston Tribune

July 3, 1990

Idaho Owes Dr. Hugh France Much for Services During Coeur d'Alene Riots

Bartlett Sinclair, Who Was an Associate, Tells of Firm Yet Tactful and Sympathetic Course of the Noted Law and Order Sheriff.

By Bartlett Sinclair.

When the Industrial history of the Coeur d'Alene mining region is recorded by an impartial and competent hand, Dr. Hugh France, whose death the papers reported last week, must be accorded much credit for all the political and social transformations of that country. He was an invaluable factor in the sweep from lawlessness to the high moral, law-abiding conditions that obtained there the last 10 years.

After a period of 20 years Dr. France made his home and performed in a model way his public and professional duties in the Coeur d'Alenes, among a large body of hard-working miners who were misled by a law-defying circle of agitators until regard for legal restraint became blunted.

No man knew their nature and impulses, their creeds, and hopes better than he. From the beginning he assumed leadership of the law and order classes of that wild and marvelous country and held it, to the hour of his death. In the innumerable clashes between these factions he was at all times in the forefront. Surrounded as he was in his daily walks by the boldest and the most reckless band of dynamiters of which history makes any record, he preached in no faltering voice or vacillating action the doctrine of obedience to law and respect for personal property and rights.

He Commanded Respect.

A more distasteful doctrine to the law breakers of one more

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At this time Dr. France was coroner of Shoshone county. Ed Young was sheriff of the county. Young's inefficiency and cowardice seemed to make it imperative, in order to accomplish results, that he be deposed. I made this clear to him, but he refused to act. The law provides that the coroner shall become sheriff when that office is vacant. Dr. France, therefore, was duly sworn in as sheriff and henceforward till martial law was terminated in the Coeur d'Alenes was my fearless and trusted colleague.

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Spokesman Review
October 31, 1909



*Post Register photo archives
Reprinted in the Coeur d'Alene Press, April 9, 1995*

Post image of the site of the assassination of former Gov. Stuenenberg on Dec. 30, 1905.



*Idaho Historical Society
Reprinted in the Post Register March 26, 1995*

From left, George Pettibone, William Haywood and Charles Moyer await their 1907 murder conspiracy trial in Boise. Haywood was acquitted and went on to lead the International Workers of the World, known as the Wobblies.

Spokane's Free Speech Riots

I.W.W. MEMBERS NOW FILL CITY JAIL

About 40 Followers of the Red Flag Confined on Bread and Water.

STILL DEFY ORDINANCE

Twenty-Seven Arraigned in Police Court & Fined \$100 & costs & 30 Days' Imprisonment

Nine I.W.W. members were arrested yesterday following attempts to hold street meetings. The attempts were all made between 1 and 1:30 o'clock before small crowds in the lower Stevens street and Main and Front avenue districts. One speaker appeared at Washington street and Riverside avenue.

Later in the afternoon James Wilson, formerly secretary of the I.W.W., was arrested by Special Officer Richards on the charge of disorderly conduct. According to the officer Wilson jabbed him with his elbow as he was passing him on the street.

No attempts at street speaking were made last night.

A fine of \$100 and costs and 30 days on the rock pile was imposed by Police Justice Mann upon the 27 I.W.W. members who appeared for trial in his court yesterday afternoon, charged with violating the street speaking ordinance. The men, who were brought into court in a body and lined up in front of the judge's desk, crowded

the space within the railing. Without comment Justice Mann pronounced sentence upon them and they were led back to their cells, where the greater part of them will serve out their sentence on a diet of bread and water, which is prescribed by city ordinance for prisoners who refuse to work in the chain gang.

The men arrested were George Moss Morris, George M. Bride, Thomas Burbank, Sam Kipling, Sam Pierce, Emil Sell, W.J. Danforth, William Stauffer, Tom Lamb and Tom Campbell.

Those fined in police court were: Vitus Potmaker, Pierce Wise, Andrew Boling, Jack Miller, T.H. Dixon, Fred Fisher, M. Halleweider, Albert Hehoul, Albert V. Roe, George Tallman, John Ott, John Barry, Barney Hoffman, S. Nelson, John Foss, Rudolph Leng, Harry Spencer, H.L. Hudson, John Jennings, C. Youse, Peter Effertz, John Reese, Theodore Bissorka, Elof Wickscorn, John Muron, Oscar Morbi and W.D. Stout.

Spokesman Review

March 9, 1909

I.W.W. DEFYING MISSOULA POLICE

Futile Efforts of Authorities to Stop Incendiary Speeches on Streets.

HURL STONES AT OFFICERS

Spokane Woman Arrested, but Case Against Her Is Dismissed in Court.

MISSOULA, Mont., Oct. 6 — Attempts on the part of the police to quell the incendiary speeches of the members of the I.W.W. on the public streets have thus far proven utterly unavailing and the situation becomes daily more tense, with the authorities seemingly unable to cope successfully with the conditions.

Tonight the police were kept busy for two hours arresting and escorting I.W.W. orators to jail and when the 35th man had been taken in charge the multitude surrounded the authorities and jostled them all the way to the jail.

Mrs. Charles Fernette, a Spokane woman member of the I.W.W. and a member of Elizabeth Gurley Flynn Jones' advisory board, was arrested last night and while being escorted to the station the multitude which followed threw stones at the police, severely injuring Officer Hoel about the body.

An attempt was made to hold a trial today, but the attorney for the prosecution dismissed the case and the woman was turned loose.

Spokesman Review

October 7, 1909

SOCIALISTS AND CLUB WOMEN BACK UP I.W.W.

Announce "Free Speech" Mass meeting for Tomorrow Night at Masonic Temple.

New York Man Wired Come

**Telegrams Sent East and Throughout Northwest Urge Agitators to Hurry to
Spokane to Assist in Fight**

Fire Department to Aid Police

Fire Commissioner George W. Armstrong yesterday addressed the following order to Fire Chief A. H. Myers in connection with the I.W.W. "free speech" fight.

"In view of the exigencies now apparent in this city and in which the police are involved in the struggle for maintenance of law and in which it is apparent that an emergency is with us, I hereby direct that you, with your department, respond to the call of Acting Chief of Police John Sullivan, subject to this order until further notice from this board.

"Hurry up" messages to socialist leaders all over the northwest and to a free speech leader in New York, with a 200-word dispatch of this city marked the enlistment of that party with the Industrial Workers of the World in the campaign to swamp the city authorities and break down the ordinance against street speaking.

Socialist leaders met last night in room 312 of the Columbia building and decided on this action. They also announced that a "free speech" mass meeting will be held Thursday night in the Masonic Temple, when addresses will be given by Mrs. Z.W. Commerford of the college Women's Equal Suffrage club, Mrs. Rose B. Moore, chairman of the social economics department of the Woman's club, and by a clergyman whose name would not be given.

"Big free speech fight on in Spokane. Come yourself if possible and bring the boys with you," was the substance of the messages sent to socialist leaders at Everett, North Yakima, Seattle, Portland, Los Angeles and Chicago.

E. J. Foote, I.W.W. organizer at Portland, arrived last night to take the place of James Wilson as editor of the local I.W.W. publication. "It is altogether up to the men," was his answer to a question as to what today's program of demonstration against the authorities would be. "We have no leaders and the members themselves must decide whether they will go to jail. I have retained as counsel for Mr. Wilson Colonel C.E.S. Wood, who has advised me

that the best thing for us to do is to have our men deliberately violate the ordinance they are fighting. Colonel Wood will defend Mr. Wilson when he is tried for criminal conspiracy."

Speakers who escaped incarceration in yesterday's roundup addressed a big crowd in the I.W.W. hall last night. Every one entering the hall was searched for weapons but none was reported found. Agnes Fair, a slim girl in a black waist with a flaming red scarf, told the crowd that she probably would be in jail inside of 24 hours, but that she wished to say - and she said so for half an hour. She received loud applause when she advocated wages of \$8 a day for four hours' work. The temporary chairman of the meeting announced, to the accompaniment of more cheers, that 45 new members had been received, at \$1 per member since 4 o'clock. He called for volunteers to the ranks of the imprisoned enthusiasts, the response being hardly tumultuous.

Police Arrest 103 Speakers

Just 103 of the proletariat - it tickles the I.W.W. to be called the proletariat - spent the night in the city jail. They can not be said to have spent a quiet evening. In the "tank" which is the abode of the greater part of the unkempt army, the right of free speech was spread all over the place, and speeches were made simultaneously in six different languages. When the speeches ran short, the inmates shouted at the top of their voice, and by midnight the celebration

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

had toned down to singing and whistling, which was said by the jailers to be an improvement over the oratory.

The last arrest was that of Peter Canaher, who was distributing I.W.W. literature and giving speeches free with each sale. He was the 103d, the rush at the booking window having ceased by 4 o'clock, the last arrest being made at 5.

With the leaders in jail, Chief Sullivan was confident that the backbone of the trouble had been broken. Wilson Thompson and the rest, who were arrested in the raid on the I.W.W. hall, are recognized as the "brains" of the organization and are believed to have directed the details of yesterday's fight.

Feeding time in the jail was about 10 o'clock last night, the imprisoned "free speakers" being given one of their two daily meals. Four men served the repast which found the prisoners in a hilarious mood.

Situation Well in Hand

Reports current during the afternoon that the militia and probably the regulars at Fort Wright would be called out to clear the streets, proved unfounded. The police had no trouble in handling the crowds, loiterers being kept on the move and would-be speakers disposed of with neatness and dispatch.

In accordance with their agreement not to make any demonstrations after nightfall, the Industrial Workers kept off the streets last night when their meeting was over. The lower part of the town, however, was well policed until midnight.

The police station blotter shows that M. Anbach, escorted by Officer Berto, was the first free speech martyr to surrender his valuables at the booking window. Following close came Jack Mosby, with Officer McLeod as his host, and Richard Brazier, in tow of Officer Dugger.

System of Handling Prisoners

From 1 o'clock, when the first man was brought in, until after 4, Desk Officer Martin V. Pitts, and the receiving line of "cops" at the window did nothing but welcome and register Industrial Workers. As fast as they came they were lined up at the window, where their names were taken by Officer Pitts and their valuables by Officer Jellset. The valuables were put in a paper sack and bound with a linen cord by Officer Sanborn and the prisoners were then escorted to their cells by Officers Bucholz and Peabody. Patrol Driver Walter Lawson was master of ceremonies. When the line had passed there was a stack of paper sacks on the desk that resembled a Salvation Army Christmas celebration, and the floor was strewn with matches, tobacco and stray scraps of paper.

One red-badged orator had what the police called "fighting jag." He clasped his money in a powerful right fist and dared the officers to take it away from him. This was just what the patrolmen were waiting for, and a little jiu jitsu brought the coins rolling onto the desk.

The police again today will receive the assistance of Sheriff McK. Pugh and his deputies, who were active yesterday. Members of private detective agencies were in the crowd of officials yesterday, but took little part in the proceedings.

Spokesman Review
October 7, 1909

GIRL AT I. W. W. HELM

TAKES CHARGE OF ATTACK ON LAW AND ORDER

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, the young I. W. W. organizer and orator, who arrived from Missoula early in the week, has taken charge of the forces of "Industrial Workers" here, and is now editing the organization's weekly journal besides making most of the speeches to encourage the antagonists of authority. Miss Flynn was the principal speaker for the I. W. W. before the city council Wednesday.

The last issue of the "Industrial Worker" paper is devoted principally to uncomplimentary allusions to the mayor, police officials, magistrates, daily newspapers, the American Federation of Labor and all who have not joined the "free speech" fight. Justice Mann is referred to as "lackey of the parasites" and "almost illiterate." Chief Sullivan is described as "a long, lean, lank, fishy-eyed individual" and the police are referred to as "hired thugs," "Cossacks," "fat-jowled Hibernians" and "hired clubbers." The A. F. L. is accused of being "craven, contemptible, yellow, lacking in the first rudiments of manhood," and so forth.

A letter from James Wilson, a picture of whom eating breakfast was printed in The Spokesman-Review, is published in the paper of which he was formerly editor. He denies that he or his companion leaders have eaten anything for a week.

Spokesman Review
November 12, 1909

MISS FLYNN TO APPEAL

I.W.W. ORGANIZER GIVES BOND OF \$5000.

Convicted of Conspiracy, She Will Ask Supreme Court to Pass on Case.

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, national organizer for the I. W. W., convicted of conspiracy and sentenced to three months in jail, will appeal her case to the supreme court. Bonds in the sum of \$5000 were given yesterday afternoon and the case will be placed on the January calendar of the criminal branch of the superior court.

Fred W. Moore, attorney for the defendant, appealed in Justice Stocker's court yesterday to arrange for the bond. He said the case will be carried up. The same sized bond as given before the justice court trial was offered. The bondsmen who signed the first bond were Mrs. Philip P. Stalford, Mrs. A. E. House and A. E. House, and Mr. Moore stated they were willing to renew the bond.

The next I. W. W. conspiracy case to be tried before Justice G. W. Stocker will probably be that against A. B. Rowe. The case will not come up until next Wednesday as Justice Stocker has some civil matters to hear first.

Spokesman Review
November 11, 1909

E. GURLEY FLYNN AS NEW YORK GIRL

Four Years Ago She Attended High School in Bronx and Lived With Parents.

NEW YORK, Dec. 11. —When news was received here of the conviction of Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, national organizer of the I. W. W., on a charge of conspiracy to incite a violation of the laws of Spokane and her sentence to three months in the county jail in that city, local labor leaders met and decided to raise funds and assist Miss Flynn in every way possible. It is believed that an appeal will be taken to a higher court from the conviction, and the best legal talent will be employed in her behalf in an effort to secure her release. Four years Miss Flynn was a high school girl in the Bronx, living quietly with her parents. She had a bright mind and a fluent command of language. She became interested in socialistic doctrines, read much and finally began to make speeches at public meetings. She was sometimes called New York's Joan of Arc. She took great interest in labor meetings and became associated with the I. W. W. Two years ago she married John A. Jones, one of the leaders of labor, and went to live in Missoula.

Spokesman Review
December 12, 1909

SAYS B.C. MINERS SUPPORT I.W.W.

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn Tells of Trip Through State and Canada

GIVE CASH, SHE DECLARES

Speaker Urges Organization and Financial Help in Promoting "Free Speech"

"There is a world of encouragement in knowing that men of the type of the British Columbia contingent of the Western Federation is in sympathy with us, hand, soul, and pocketbook," said Elizabeth Gurley Flynn last night at the meeting of the Industrial Workers of the World at Turner hall before a large and enthusiastic audience. Miss Flynn recently returned from an extended trip through Washington and British Columbia, where she spoke on the free speech situation in Spokane.

"When I visited miners in the strike district of British Columbia I was as enthusiastically welcomed as I have been here tonight. The free speech question up there and the situation here is as much of a burning question with them as it was here two months ago and as it will be here in two months more if my fellow workers organize! organize! They gave me the use of their halls, and they followed that up by turning out in full force every time I spoke, and the greatest thing of all happened when they dug deep into their pockets and produced the substance in the form of abundant silver to carry on the fight in Spokane."

Takes shot at Prosecutor.

"In a recent trial in the superior court Prosecuting Attorney Fred Pugh sneeringly remarked that the labor movement was involved in a certain case. He said 'the labor movement,' whatever that is! My fellow workers, it makes little difference whether Prosecutor Pugh knows what it is. Just see to it that you know," and the girl orator continued to harangue her audience, referring but little to her coming trial on the charge of conspiracy.

The other speaker on the program was Fred H. Moore, I. W. W. attorney.

The next meeting and the last regular meeting before the trial of Miss Flynn will be held Sunday evening in Turner hall. The speakers have not yet been chosen.

Spokesman Review
February 3, 1910

The Coeur d'Alene's

MINERS FOR I. W. W. BUT NO BOYCOTT

**Burke Union Leaders Deny Talk of Action Against Butte and Spokane.
RESOLUTIONS TO SPOKANE**

**Extend Sympathy to "Workers" in Power City Clamoring for Privilege of Free
Speech.**

WALLACE, Idaho, Nov. 15. The Burke union of the Western Federation of Miners has passed resolution extending their sympathy to the I. W. W. in their struggle in Spokane, a copy of the resolutions being sent to Spokane.

While there has been much talk that the Burke union has boycotted Spokane and Butte, the officers of the local at Burke deny there has been talk of boycott and assert there has been no action of the sort taken.

Spokesman Review
November 16, 1909

Editorial

In Justice to Labor

In justice to organized labor, as pointed out by President C. R. Case of the State Federation of Labor, the so-called "Industrial Workers of the World" should not be confounded with reputable and law-respecting labor unions. President Case points out that "organized labor has its meetings all over the state, and freely discusses its affairs and the problems met by labor. Free speech is enjoyed by these regularly organized workingmen."

The distinction is obvious. The so-called Industrial Workers are an anarchistic organization, composed largely of hobo's and loafers. Their fundamental doctrine is the repudiation of law and all human authority, and their purpose is to annoy and harass officers of the law and interfere, so far as they can, with the performance of official duties.

As President Case well says, there is no issue of the right of free speech between organized labor and the public. Labor unions enjoy in that respect precisely the same rights that are enjoyed by other

citizens and other organizations. The right to hold orderly public meetings on Spokane streets, outside of the fire limits, extends to all citizens and all organizations alike, and the prohibition against public meetings on streets within the fire limits is general against everybody. Under the law no body of men has a right to engage in disorderly meetings anywhere within the city.

The disorderly, stubborn and contentious men who have drifted in here in an avowed conspiracy to violate the ordinances and defy the officers of the law, are demanding privileges that are not asked by lawful, reputable labor organizations. Most of these defiant men and vagrants who will not work at honest labor, and are attempting to obstruct traffic, retard industry and interfere with the business and occupation of the citizens of Spokane.

Spokesman Review
November 7, 1909

Spokesman Review
November 3, 1909

They Libel Spokane

“Shame on your town!” writes L. H. Gibbs of Scranton, Pa., who has been reading the false reports of the I. W. W. agitation sent out from Spokane by socialistic sympathizers. This Scranton man declares a belief that socialism “is sweeping the land like a tidal wave,” and adds that Spokane’s treatment of the I. W. W. conspirators is helping it along.

This indicates the motive behind the dissemination by Spokane socialists of false statements that have been eagerly seized upon by socialist newspapers. They want a grievance and are unscrupulous in the manufacture of it. The Scranton writer has swallowed, without question, all the scurrilous falsehoods about police persecution, “black holes” and “steam-tortured victims,” and wants to know if it is true that the police of Spokane have been subjecting to felonious assault “unfortunate women who fell into their clutches.”

It is not true, and the *Spokesman-Review* feels like apologizing to the police of this city for dignifying the villainous libel with a denial.

There was not the slightest justification for the conspiracy between the I. W. W. and socialist agita-

tors to annoy the industrious people of Spokane, violate their laws and scatter broadcast falsehoods with which they have attempted to bolster up their conspiracy.

The men who were drawn here from all parts of the United States to fill the jails are notoriously and avowedly bums and hoboos. They did not come here seeking work, but to live off the industry of others. They never had a real grievance, nor anything approaching a grievance.

There has been no abridgment of the right of free speech in Spokane. The ordinance regulating street speaking in the business district is reasonable and has been pronounced constitutional by the courts of this state. It is the law, and men who conspire to break it are lawbreakers. Our own citizens obey it, and it is preposterous to demand that disorderly vagabonds, drawn in here from distant places, shall be allowed to put themselves above the law and dictate to Spokane citizens what ordinances shall be repealed and what enacted.

Spokesman Review
December 19, 1909

**GURLEY FLYNN IN SEATTLE
SAYS I.W.W. NOT THROUGH WITH
SPOKANE FIGHT**

**“Present Quiet Is Only Calm Before Storm
That Will Make City Notorious,” She Asserts.**

SEATTLE, JAN. 5 — Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, who is taking a leading part in the fight of the Industrial Workers of the World against the police of Spokane and who is now charged with criminal conspiracy against law and order, arrived in Seattle this morning declaring that the strife in the Inland Empire city is not an end. She reached Seattle by boat from Everett and will return to the latter place tonight.

“We will return to the fight in Spokane,” asserted Miss Flynn. “The present quiet is only the calm before the storm. We are not whipped. We are fighting for that inalienable right granted every American citizen by the federal constitution and we are conducting a campaign of advertising Spokane that will make that city notorious throughout the land.”

Spokesman Review
January 6, 1910

NEW JAIL PLANNED IN I.W.W. CONTEST

**City Officials Will Convert Old Franklin
School Into Temporary Prison.**

TO PRESERVE HEALTH AIM

**School Board Grants Commissioners Permission to
Use Abandoned Building**

To relieve the congested condition in the city jail and to eliminate as far as possible the likelihood of a serious outbreak of disease among the I. W. W. prisoners, the city today will begin the work of converting the old Franklin school into a temporary prison.

Here it is estimated several hundred men can be housed comfortably without much danger of sickness. As soon as the heating apparatus can be repaired and the windows barred several free speech agitators will be transferred to the new quarters.

Officials estimate that, if necessary, 100 more men could be jailed in the present quarters, but not without serious danger to health, as a majority of these prisoners are said to disregard all sanitary rules.

The school board, at its meeting last night, granted the city commissioners permission to use this building, which recently was abandoned for school purposes, without charge. The understanding is that the work of wrecking will be postponed until after the free speech agitation is quelled.

Spokesman Review
November 9, 1909

**I.W.W., CHILLED, GROW
DESPERATE**

**Tear Woodwork Out of Franklin School to
Build Fires
REFUSE TO CUT WOOD
Police Threaten to Turn Hose On “Reds” and
Check Destruction.**

Refusing to cut or carry in wood for fires to keep themselves warm, members of the Industrial Workers of the World confined at the Franklin schoolhouse last night at 11 o'clock became desperate from the cold and began tearing away the woodwork in the rooms in which they are held prisoners to make a warming blaze.

Before the police guards had discovered what was going on the prisoners had torn away quite a number of boards and were in the act of starting fires in the two heaters.

Without any delay the police guards laid the schoolhouse fire hose and informed the prisoners that if any more boards were torn from the rooms the punishment would be a thorough drenching.

Early last night the 124 prisoners confined at the schoolhouse were informed that if they desired to keep warm wood would have to be cut and carried in. They all refused to a man.

March to Keep Warm.

When the cold night wind began to whistle about the schoolhouse and beat its way in around the windows the temperature in the school building began to fall rapidly. The men stood about until the cold got too severe and then, forming in line, they began marching. This method of keeping warm proved too hard and thus the idea of tearing away the woodwork met with favor. Several men would sit on a piece of wainscoting to keep it from making a loud noise when it gave way to arouse the guards while others pulled it off. In this manner considerable woodwork was torn off before the guards grew suspicious.

Eight members of the I.W.W. confined at the school asked permission yesterday to go to work on the chain gang, as they had tired of the bread and water rations and cold.

Seven street speakers were arrested yesterday and locked up, charged with disorderly conduct.

Spokesman Review
November 27, 1909



Hard at Work on New County Rockpile Getting Out Rock for Monroe Street Bridge.

I.W.W. MEN ARE FAST ON ROCKPILE

Clean Up All Loose Stone and Render It Necessary to Blast

THIRTEEN HOLES DRILLED

**Charges will be Touched Off Today
Material to Be Used for Roads.**

Industrial Workers of the World on county rockpile have done such good work during the last month that all the loose rock has been cleared up and placed in one huge heap. Now it is necessary to blast and loosen more rock from the main pile.

Sheriff Pugh has had 13 holes drilled for blasting. Officer Jacob Warner of the police force probably will touch off the blasts today and the chain gang can then go on with its work of gathering the small rock and breaking up the larger pieces.

The average number of prisoners on the rockpile lately has been 28. That makes a good working force that has accomplished considerable toward the destruction of the unsightly mass and the preparation of crushed stone for road building.

Spokesman Review
December 24, 1909

Editorial

PLENTY OF ROCK TO BREAK.

I.W.W. agitators who threaten to renew their shattered conspiracy to violate the laws and defy the courts will find cold comfort in a statement made yesterday by Captain of Police Martin J. Burns:

Since it is finally determined that the Monroe street bridge is to be built by day labor all of the crushed rock needed can be furnished from the city rockpile. We have two rock crushers on the ground and three more are on the way. We have comfortable quarters for 1000 laborers and all we need is "men" in order to supply the vast amount of crushed rock that will be needed for the big bridge.

The people of Spokane prefer to have crushed rock for the Monroe street bridge supplied by honest and respectable labor, employed at good wages. But if the I.W.W. agitators insist on their foolish scheme of filling the jails and the city's rock piles the authorities will have to accommodate them. In that way the cost of building the Monroe street bridge may be materially reduced, and the saving thus made can be turned into other public improvements, and thus as much employment be given to honest labor as it would have had if the I.W.W. rockbreakers had kept away from Spokane.

Spokesman Review
February 11, 1910

I.W.W. PAPER SHIFTED

**MAILED FROM SEATTLE, BUT
AUTHORITIES TAKE NOTICE.**

**First Copies to Reach Spokane Will Be
Carefully Scrutinized by Postal Men.**

Blocked by the city and county authorities in their attempts to publish the "Industrial Worker," the official organ of the I.W.W. in this city, leaders of the "free speech" movement, still ignoring the official surrender of a week ago, are issuing a Spokane edition of the paper in Seattle and mailing it to subscribers and supporters in this city and the Inland Empire. The first copies of the paper under the new order reached this city yesterday afternoon and were distributed in the local post-office.

Attention of the local postal authorities and at Washington, D.C., will be called to the issue in case any of the articles are of an incendiary, inflammatory or grossly libelous nature, as in the past. Copies of the paper are, according to reports, as scarce as white elephants, none up to last night falling into the hands of the authorities.

Spokesman Review
December 24, 1909

FILIGNO IS FOUND GUILTY, GURLEY FLYNN ACQUITTED

**After Seventeen Hours' Deliberation
Jury Returns Verdict in
Conspiracy Case.**

GIRLAGITATOR FROWNS

**Bites Lip, Then Scowls as Announcement is Made-
Codefendant Returns to Cell Apparently Happy-
New Trial Will Be Asked**

Spokesman Review
February 25, 1910

I.W.W. PROMISE TO STOP RIOTING

Committee Meets City Officials and Enters Into Hard and Fast Agreement.

STREET SPEAKING BARRED

Paper may Resume, but Must be Careful What It Publishes

An important conference, which is expected to put an end to the I.W.W. disturbances in Spokane, was held between Mayor N. S. Pratt, Chief of Police John T. Sullivan, Prosecuting Attorney Fred Pugh and Assistant Corporation Attorney John E. Blair, representing the city and J. J. McKelvey, J. J. Stark, D. J. Gillispie and William Z. Foster for the I.W.W. yesterday afternoon and evening at the courthouse in Coeur d'Alene.

This committee waited on the mayor Monday, with a view to bringing about a settlement, but it developed that it had no authority to bind the I.W.W. to any agreement and the authorities declined to deal further with it until it could produce credentials showing a right to make a binding promise.

At the meeting yesterday the necessary documents were forthcoming and a basis of settlement was agreed upon. The city officials agreed to grant the following privileges:

The I. W. W. hall may be maintained, meetings held and public speaking conducted therein, without interference on the part of the police, provided that everything is run as it was prior to the disturbance November 2.

Paper May Be Published.

The publication of the organization paper, the Industrial Worker, is to be permitted as long as it does not contain any matter which is in violation of the law.

All I.W.W. prisoners now in jail will be released at the end of the 90 days, if there is no further demonstrations; otherwise all will have to serve their full sentences.

The committee agreed, for the I.W.W. to call off the fight with the police and abide by the street-speaking ordinance. Considerable discussion arose over the latter part of this provision, the I.W.W. committee wishing the representatives of the city government to agree to a change in this ordinance, which would allow free public speaking.

Mayor Pratt said that while he could not make any promise that would bind the council to any such action, he would use his personal influence in favor of the change and would favor an ordinance which will allow public speaking under proper restrictions.

The surrender of Heslewood to the city of Spokane under extradition was insisted upon, but the I.W.W. committee claimed to have no authority to compel this. The matter went over until this evening, when it was agreed that Heslewood should return to Spokane under \$2000 bond and that if no further disturbances occurred within 90 days, he would be released from bail.

The habeas corpus proceedings brought by Attorney Fred H. Moore and E. V. Boughton to secure Heslewood's release were dropped.

Charges of perjury brought by Mrs. Heslewood against Detective Martin J. Burns will be withdrawn this morning at the session of Justice Chambers' court. No appeal is to be taken by the defendant in the Filigno case.

Spokesman Review
March 4, 1910

Mess call in 1915, Lumber Camp

LUMBER CAMPS GIVE MANY WORK

Labor Conditions Much Better Than Last Year, Say Employment Agents.

Labor conditions are better than last year at this season, according to statements made by employment agents. At any rate there are not so many idle men in the city. It will be remembered that a year ago hundreds of men were penniless and were glad to be granted permission to sleep on the ground or on the benches in the Bill Sunday tabernacle.

“There is little demand for railroad help at this season, but we are finding employment for about 50 men each day in the lumber camps,” said J. J. Macho of the Macho employment bureau. “There are many men in the city who are idle, but it is not as it was last year at this season.

We had men coming to us every day then who had been depending on us for 10 or 12 years to find them a job when they wanted work. We knew they would make good, but we simply could not locate anything for them. There are jobs this year for all who are willing to work.”

Another agency which deals with railroad contractors exclusively explained that since the cold weather had set in most of the dirt work had been suspended and that some of the work which would have been opened up earlier would not be ready before the first of the year, as the strike in two or three cases has delayed the transportation of construction machinery.

Spokesman Review
December 17, 1909

KILLED IN COLORADO MINE, 149
Bodies of 79 Found in a Heap at Foot of Air Shaft.
FANS ARE SHATTERED
Rescuers Working Desperately to Reach Entombed Victims.
DEAD BLOWN TO PIECES

Explosion at Primero Said to Be Worst Disaster in History of Western Coal Mining.

PRIMERO, Col., Feb. 1.—Seventy-nine bodies of the victims of an explosion in the Primero mine of the Colorado Fuel company were found piled in a mass at the foot of the air shaft shortly after midnight. When the explosion occurred at 4:30 Monday afternoon the men evidently made a rush to escape through the air shaft and were suffocated as they battled with one another for freedom.

It has been shown by the timekeepers' records that there were 149 men in the mine at the time of the explosion. None is thought to be alive. The main shaft of the mine is completely wrecked.

Both fans with which the mine is equipped were shattered, but were in working order until 7:30 o'clock tonight.

Main Shaft Blocked.

As soon as the fans were reported out of order General Superintendent J. F. Thompson and a rescue party entered by the main air shaft, but were unable to reach the main shaft, which is completely blocked. The party returned to the surface after securing five bodies, which were badly burned.

A party equipped with oxygen helmets replaced them in the workings reached through the air shaft, searching for more bodies. Miners were rushed to Primero from Trinidad, Saundo, Starkville, Sopris and Cokeville and are laboring frantically to clear the main shaft relieving each other every few minutes. It is impossible to determine how far the main shaft has caved in and it may be days before the shaft is cleared and the total death list known.

There is little hope that any of the men in the mine are alive.

Most of the victims are Slavs and Hungarians,

although Electrician Wilhelm is known to be among the missing.

Scene of Horror.

The camp is a scene of indescribable horror tonight. While every able-bodied man is taking his turn with pick and shovel to clear the shaft, the women and children, kept back by ropes, have gathered about the shaft, weeping and calling wildly upon their loved ones who have not been found.

Experts from all the coal companies of the state have gathered to assist Superintendent Thompson. A. C. French, superintendent of the Wollen mines, and J. E. Miley, mine inspector, will head another rescue party as soon as batteries for electric lighting arrive by special train.

Members of the rescue party say that the effect of the explosion underground is indescribable. The bodies recovered were horribly burned and unrecognizable. One body was impaled on broken timbers.

Bodies Blown to Pieces.

At 10 o'clock last night 15 bodies were recovered from one of the main slopes. The bodies were literally blown to pieces and were unrecognizable.

A special train carrying six physicians and Coroner Gilfoyle arrived at 9:45.

Officials of the company state the disaster is the worst in the history of western mining. A similar explosion in which 234 were killed occurred in the same property on January 23, 1907. The bodies were not recovered for weeks.

The mine authorities telegraphed an order to Denver early this morning for 80 coffins. One man only has been found alive. He is badly injured and has not been identified.

Spokesman Review
February 1, 1910

RESCUERS GO 12,000 FEET INTO MINE WHERE HUNDRED MEN ARE ENTOMBED

Women Watching on Hillsides Disappointed as Last Party Emerges Empty-Handed After Long Search in Wrecked Stopes Filled with Afterdamp.

STARKVILLE, Col., Oct. 10.—As darkness settled tonight over the entrance to the Starkville mine, the hope that had been entertained by the watchers at the pit mouth throughout the day that some, at least, of those entombed would be found alive grew faint and discouragement settled over the silent crowd.

This morning the expert miners at the head of the rescue party were confident that a portion of the men might be rescued. They hoped the portable fan forcing pure air into workings would keep the men in the extreme southern portion of the mine alive until they could be reached, but as the rescue party stumbled slowly out of the slope tonight, one glance at their weary, dust-grimed faces told the watchers that hope was almost extinguished. After a day of arduous work in the face of constant peril, the rescue party had penetrated the mine nearly 12,000 feet, or within 900 feet of the men imprisoned nearest the main entrance. Instead of finding the mine clear of debris and afterdamp at this point, the workings were found to be wrecked and poisonous air was present in quantities.

Force of Explosion Great.

The leaders would not consent of the rescuers going further. Ten thousand feet from the entrance the spot where a fan had been operated before the explosion was badly damaged. The fan was found torn to pieces and scattered hundreds of feet. The 1200-pound motor had been thrown 50 feet and bent and broken. The party was compelled to stop and make repairs. Considerable bratticing was done, and in the meantime a dog which had accompanied the party wandered aimlessly ahead. It was found later lying stretched upon the floor, overcome by afterdamp.

When the rescue party resumed its journey inward it branched off for a short distance and then took a southern course toward the spot where the men were supposed to have been working Saturday night. The dog's experience proved valuable and reconnoitering parties of two or three men, selected from the 16 forming the main party, were

sent ahead to test the air. These scouting parties reported afterdamp was noticeable in more or less quantities in all of the short cuts and also in the main slope. General Manager Weitzel was then communicated with by portable telephone and told the conditions. He ordered the men out of the mine until the air could be improved.

Increase Air Circulation.

While the night shift was waiting to be sent inside, a gang was also put to work installing a blower at the mouth of the airshaft. This is an emergency measure to prevent the sudden stoppage of air supply by the failure of the portable fan. This was one of the dangers that threatened the rescue men throughout the day.

All day long the hills facing the mine were dotted with groups of women and children, relatives and friends of the entombed men. With the appearance of each dust-be-grimed miner the women would press forward anxiously questioning him for news. Mothers, unwilling to leave their children at home, and many carrying babies, stood stolidly within sight of the portal for hours.

Expect to Find Bodies Soon.

State Mine Inspector John G. Jones was the last of the rescue party to come out. He said he felt sure that the night shift would come upon bodies tonight. He explained that the terrific force of the explosion, as indicated by the damage, makes it almost certain that the men are dead.

Report Seven Bodies Found.

Reports emanating from Trinidad tonight state that 13 bodies had been found late this afternoon and had been taken to within several hundred feet of the portal of the new stope and left until the crowds outside the mine had dispersed.

The report had it that the plan is to bring out the bodies after every one but company men has left the mine, thereby preventing harrowing scenes customary on such occasions.

Although company officers deny that any bodies had yet been found, they state that it is expected that by midnight some would be located.

Spokesman Review
October 11, 1910

DEMANDING BUREAU OF MINES

Insistent Pressure to Be Brought Upon Congress — Official of United Mine Workers Severe in Criticism of Methods at Cherry Disaster — Great Loss of Life.

CHICAGO, Jan. 8.—Duncan McDonald, president of the United Mine Workers of Illinois, who is here to take up the work of compiling the evidence against the St. Paul Mining company in the Cherry mine disaster, said tonight that when the convention of the United Mine Workers of America convenes in Indianapolis for a two weeks' session, beginning January 18, steps will be taken to force the federal government to establish a bureau of mines and make the mining laws of the various states uniform.

The miners' president said the mining regulations would be the principal thing taken up at the Indianapolis meeting, and that if necessary political action would be taken to defeat the lawmakers who refused to use their offices in securing the passage of better laws.

McDonald declares that since the Cherry disaster the members of both houses are making a great fuss over the establishment of rescue stations and overlooking laws which would protect the workers before they enter the mine.

McDonald is bitter in his denunciation of the rescue work at the Cherry mine and says that if there had been a few practical miners on the work instead of "book learned theorists," as he terms the federal mining experts, there would have been at least a dozen more men taken out of the second vein alive.

Demands for Safety.

Some of the things that miners in convention will demand are: That more practical miners be appointed as mine inspectors; that all shafts shall not be less than 300 feet from the main shaft and that all shafts be fire-proof; that the examination of men who say they are miners be more rigid and that the employers liability law and general workingman's compensation law be enacted.

McDonald, in discussing the class of men who are sent down in mines, said: "The miners of today are chosen as a result of their cheapness, whether they are fit for the

work or not. If there had been a few more experienced miners in the Cherry pit there would not be 210 dead bodies down there now. The twenty-one who were saved owe their lives to one old miner who was in the group."

Trees or Lives?

Attorney Seymour Stedman, counsel for the miners in the Cherry disaster, produced some figures today which showed that the United States is spending millions of dollars yearly in research and experimenting with natural resources while only \$150,000 was expended for the benefit of miners, who added \$200,000,000 to the wealth of the country during the last fiscal year.

"In the last 10 years 18,138 miners have been killed in mine accidents," said Stedman today. "Is it more important that the trees be saved from rotting or that these terrible accidents be prevented?"

Stedman alleges that the state mining laws were violated by the St. Paul Mining company. Some of the violations he charges are: That there was no escapement shaft in the meaning of the mining statute; that the men were not told where the fire-fighting apparatus was located in the pit; that kerosene and cheaper grades of oil were used instead of animal or vegetable oils; that boys under the legal age, 16 years, were employed.

Duncan McDonald, when shown a table giving the loss of life in American and European mines which will be presented at the Indianapolis convention, said: "The table will be much larger next year if the American people do not force congress and the various legislatures to enact better mining laws."

The loss of life in America is far greater than in most countries as the tables demonstrate. North America's loss of life per 1000 miners employed in 1907 was 4.17, Belgium, 1; France, .91; Great Britain, 1.28; Prussia, 2.06.

Spokesman Review
January 9, 1910

“LABORSUNDAY” PLAN PRESENTED

Invite Churches Once a Year to Give Special Attention to Wage Workers.

SOCIALISM IS COMING UP

This Week in American Federation Meeting Promises some Lively Discussions.

TORONTO, Can., Nov. 13.—“Labor Sunday” is a suggestion laid before the American Federation of Labor in a resolution introduced today by Secretary Frank Morrison. The resolution would designate the first Sunday in September of each year as an occasion when the churches of America devote some part of the day to a presentation of the labor question.

A resolution offered by the American Federation of Musicians asks that the American Federation of Labor petition congress to appoint a special committee to investigate the methods employed by the steel industry.

Following the arrival from New York of John Spurge and Robert Hunter, well-known workers in the socialists field, Frank Hayes, a delegate of the United Mine Workers, introduced a resolution declaring for the socialistic economic program.

The convention went on record in favor of securing an extension of the eight-hour law to cover all government work.

The second week’s session of the convention of the American Federation of Labor, beginning Monday, will develop the real work. This week’s meetings have been largely preparatory. The coming

week, however, will open with the discussion of the committee reports and then the real tossle will come.

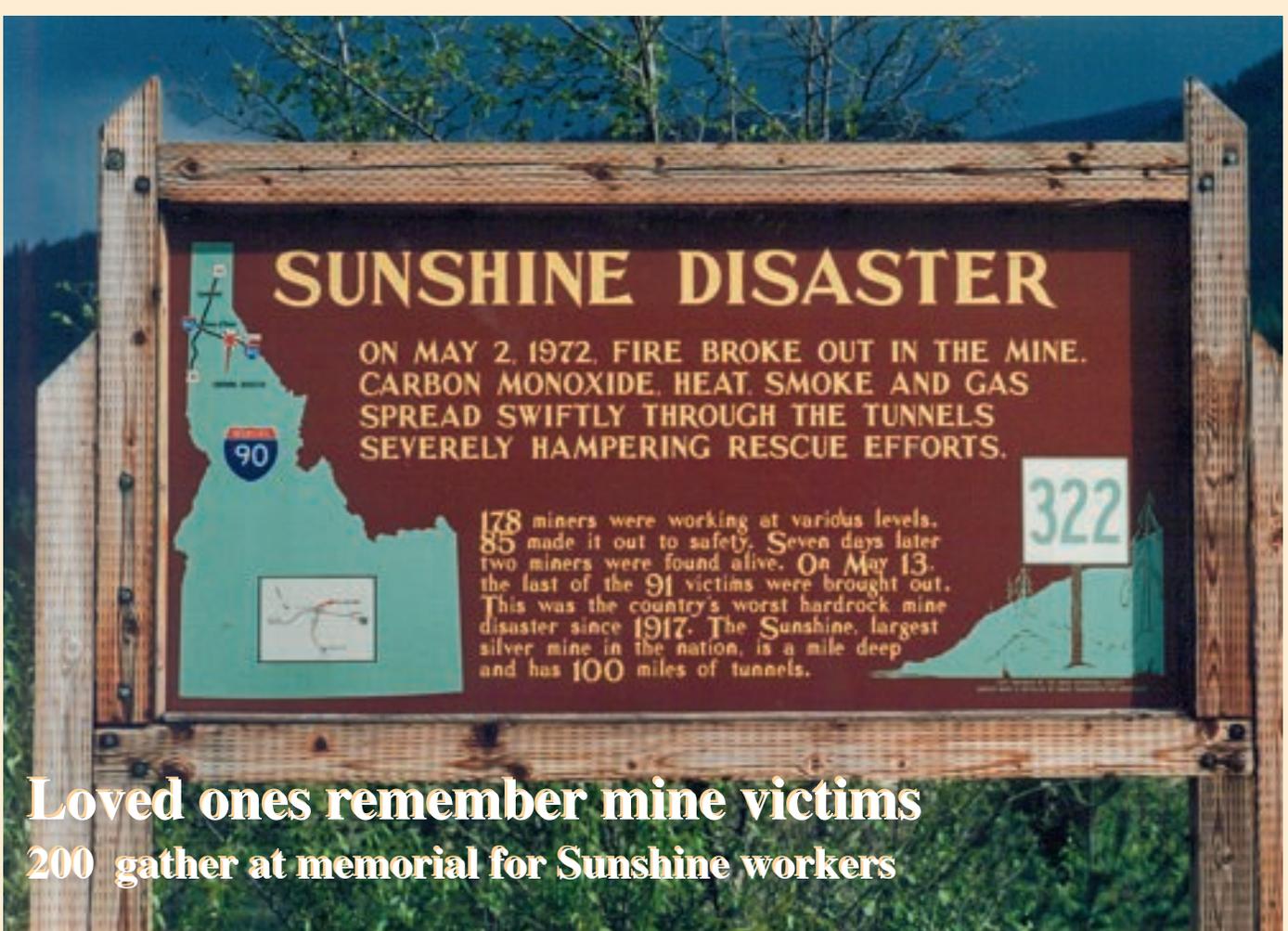
The law committee has completed its investigation of the electrical workers fight and will report early. It is hinted tonight that the “regulars” may not have all their demands granted, though whether the “insurgents” will be placated sufficiently to bring them back into the fold is problematical.

A bitter discussion is sure to follow the demand for an investigation of the boot and shoe workers in granting the union stamp to the Cass & Doley factory, at Salem, Mass., when according to the United Shoe Workers’ Union, an outlaw organization, the wage discussion at the factory was in dispute.

The features of today’s sessions were the defeat of the per capita tax for the strike defense fund and the adoption of a resolution calling for American citizenship for Porto Ricans.

Tonight most of the delegates attended a band concert in Massey hall and for tomorrow Toronto’s 170 churches have all put in bids for the delegates. Many of the leaders left tonight for neighboring towns to made addresses.

Spokesman Review
November 14, 1909



Easy

Loved ones remember mine victims 200 gather at memorial for Sunshine workers

By Susan Drumheller
Staff writer

OSBURN, Idaho - Miners who survived the Sunshine Mine disaster 20 years ago and the loved ones of those who died gathered at the Miners' Memorial near Big Creek Saturday to remember May 2, 1972.

Almost 200 people attended the special service that featured prayer, the ROTC color guard, speakers and music.

But many in attendance said they visit the bronze statue memorial regularly to read over the 91 names of men who died in the nation's worst mine disaster since 1917.

"We visit it two or three times a year," said 18-year-old Greg Findley, whose father, Roger Findley, narrowly escaped the silver mine that day. The teenager's uncle, Lyle Findley, was not so fortunate, and became one of the 91 casualties.

Roger Findley was only 19 and working 3,600 feet underground when fire broke out in the mine.

Findley took a "skip," a mine elevator, to the 3,100-foot level, where he offered to stay and count the number of workers going up to the surface. Workers began collapsing around him and Findley decided it was time to go.

"I had to step over a few bodies on the way out," he

said. Findley believes he was the last person to escape that day.

One skip operator died at the controls, while many men waited below - trapped. Two trapped men found an air space and stayed there until they were rescued eight days later. They were the only men found alive in the mine.

Findley went back down on the fourth day to help retrieve equipment while the fire still burned in the mine shafts. But after that, he never returned underground.

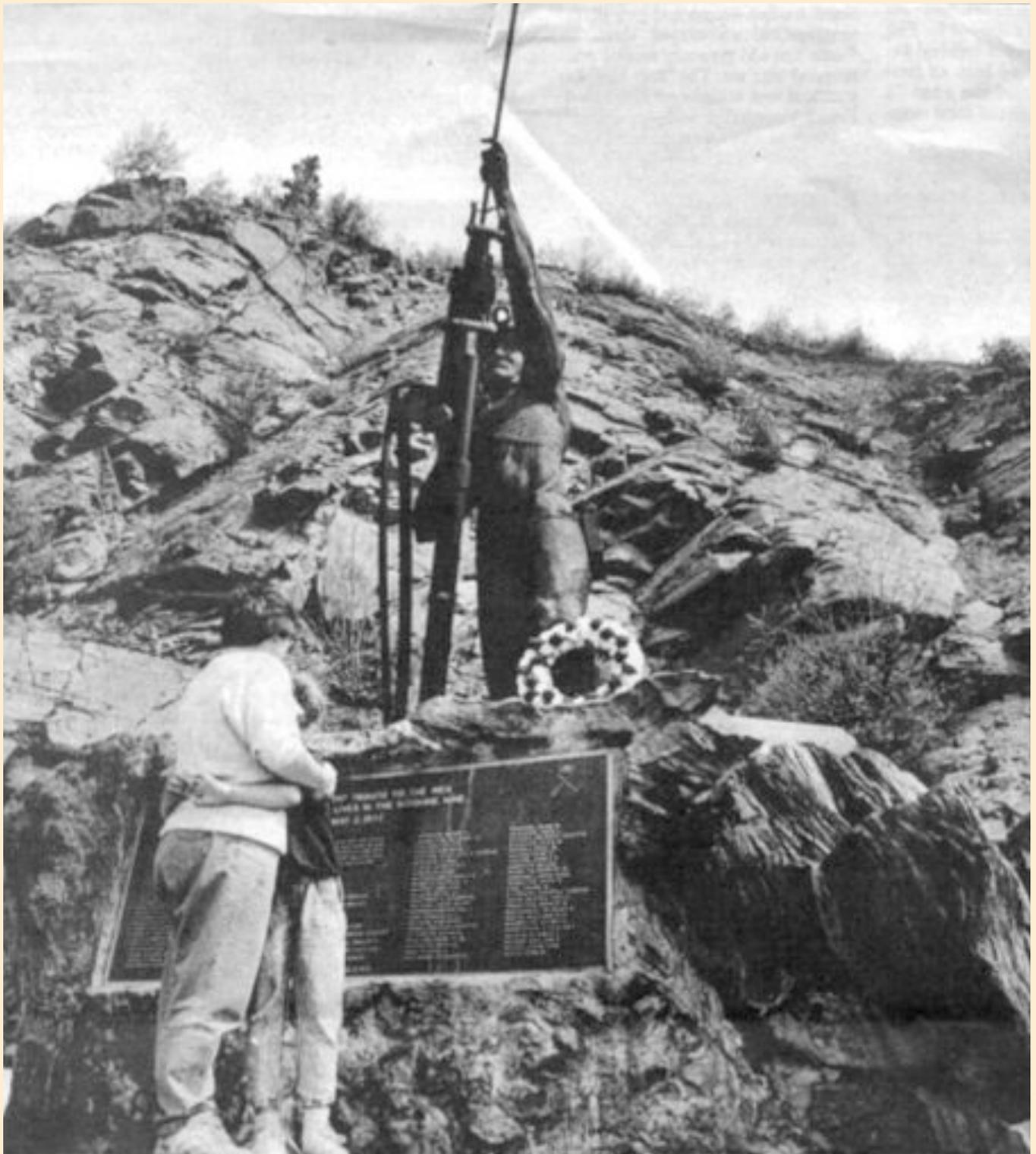
Several workers went back into the smoky shafts to save their co-workers, who in many cases were family members. Some never returned.

It still pains Dorothy Johnson to think back on the day she lost her husband to the mine.

"He pulled somebody out and went back in," she said, fighting back tears at the memorial service. "He always helped anyone he could. That's the kind of person he was."

Spokesman Review
May 3, 1992

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Jesse Tinsley

Tammye Poulson hugs her daughter Nicki, 7, and tells her about a friend who died in the Sunshine Mine accident 20 years ago. Poulson joined many others who gathered at a memorial dedicated to those killed in the disaster.

Spokesman Review

May 3, 1992

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The Labor Question Revisited

Spokesman Review
January 15, 1910

Editorial

Kathie Lee goes to war against the sweat shop creeps

All the kidding aside about perky Kathie Lee Gifford and her perky line of Wal-Mart clothes made in not-so-perky child-labor sweat shops. Those sweat shop owners may have crossed the wrong perky person. After discovering what was going on, she has taken the bull by the horns and declared a sincere, perky war on those creeps.

The comedians are having a field day with the discovery that clothing made under the name of such a celebrated Goody Two Shoes was being manufactured in grim places exploiting their workers. But it's time to put the chuckles aside. A bit of a victim herself in this matter, Gifford has blood in her eye. She is determined to do something, not just about the people making her line of clothing, but about all such criminals.

Because of Gifford, Labor Secretary Robert Reich has called an industry summit meeting of retailers, manufacturers and factory sponsors.

“All of us must demand that the industry accept the moral responsibility for ending Third World working conditions in the most prosperous nation on earth,” Reich said. “Kathie Lee Gifford and every other celebrity can protect their good names by making sure they don't put it on sweatshop-made garments.”

Gifford pledged that she will work for change. However, if she and her husband, football announcer Frank Gifford, don't see sufficient reform, she insists she'll get out of the clothing business.

If other American celebrities take the same stand—no matter where the clothes and shoes they endorse are manufactured— it could do wonders for wages and working conditions in that industry here and abroad.

Good for Kathie Lee Gifford. She's not only perky but conscientious.—B.H.

Lewiston Tribune
June 13, 1996

Bunker Hill men at risk from lead

By Cynthia Taggart

Staff writer

COEUR d'ALENE—Men who worked in the Bunker Hill Mining Co.'s lead smelter are far more likely to die of kidney disease, cancer and strokes than other men their age, a study by a national agency shows.

Deaths from kidney disease among 1,990 men who worked at the smelter between 1940 and 1965 were four times higher than expected based on U.S. death rates. Deaths from kidney cancer were nearly double, and deaths from strokes were one-and-a-half times higher than expected.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health conducted the health survey in 1985 and updated it in 1988. The agency now is compiling the information in letter form for the 800 or so workers still alive.

"We're notifying them based on their right to know," said Linda Goldenhar, a doctorate-level behavioral scientist with the agency. "We want to give them the information in a way that's understandable, and we'll provide recommendations."

But for most lead smelter workers, the information is nothing new.

"I could've told them those results a long time ago," said retired smelter worker Pete Piekarski. "Why didn't they do something about it when I was working there?"

Piekarski, who lives in Pinehurst, Idaho, spent 27 years in the smelter. For 10 of those years, he said, he fought Bunker to replace removed warning signs about the dangers of lead. The company had removed the signs from the men's changing room when it painted the room.

As a member of the smelter's safety committee in the 1970s, Piekarski said he tried to get NIOSH to do something about the lead dust control.

"They'd run tests on people, but we could never get them to do anything about the dust," he said. "They're just covering their own rear ends now."

Piekarski didn't need NIOSH to tell him about the

high rate of kidney disease and strokes in smelter workers. He's attended plenty of funerals since his retirement in 1978 and has kidney problems himself.

"Friends have died of strokes. There's a high rate of kidney failure among my friends, neighbors, acquaintances," he said. "You get hardened. We knew we were working in a hazardous industry."

While the study won't do much more than warn former smelter workers of their health risks, it could help future generations.

Steve West, who is in charge of the state's environmental health activities at the Bunker Hill Superfund site, said scientists haven't known much about lead's dangerous health effects until recently.

"As we learn more, people can adjust their practices to incorporate the new knowledge," he said.

Barbara Miller, director of the Silver Valley People's Action Coalition, said she hopes the NIOSH study will help loosen the purse strings of federal agencies. Her group has fought for years for money to help families poisoned by lead from the smelter get medical help.

"If people could get help instead of waiting until

Continued on next page

Missoulian
May 31, 1996

Continued from previous page

they're actually dying, it would be nice," she said. "I think the study will make a difference. It goes hand in hand with why we have the cleanup: Toxic waste has ruined people's health."

For the NIOSH study, researchers examined the personnel records of nearly 2,000 smelter workers. They also looked at Social Security records and the National Death Index, Goldenhar said.

The workers were not contacted and did not undergo any medical exams for the study.

Of the 1,028 workers who died by the time of the study, nine died from kidney cancer, four from kidney disease and 26 from strokes. Other cancers, heart disease, lung disease and accidents claimed the rest.

Forty men died from lung disease — twice the expected number. But most of those men also worked in underground mines. NIOSH blames the deaths on the mining rather than smelter work.

The study found that death from strokes was more common in men who had been exposed to lead over a long time — typically more than 20 years.

Piekarski said he watched many friends work in the smelter until retirement at 65 and die within a year or two. He retired at 61.

"The older they got, the less their bodies could handle it," he said. "I retired early and I'm still alive 16 years later."

Steve Brown, the valley's representative to the United Steelworkers Union, said he expects workers to take their warning letters from NIOSH to their doctors and lawyers.

The smelter workers are covered by health insurance now, but money could run out at any time. The company that owned the site — Pintlar Corp., the Kellogg subsidiary of Gulf USA Corp. — is in bankruptcy.

"The federal government subsidized the development of lead, silver and zinc for about 20 years," Brown said. "Maybe there's some liability there. I don't know whether anyone can be held accountable."

Spokesman Review
May 21, 1994

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A new study highlights the economic dilemma facing many Spokane residents, Frank Bartel says.

Paltry wages, higher living costs drive up poverty levels in Spokane

As a percentage of total jobs, Spokane employment in manufacturing, which pays way higher wages and better benefits than other job sectors, lags behind the rest of the nation by nearly a third.

But even in manufacturing, wages in Spokane fall far below state and national industry averages.

Not surprisingly then, family and per capita income are way below the state and the country as a whole.

What is surprising to outside observers is that, considering the poor pay — and worker benefits fare still worse by comparison, anecdotal evidence suggests — Spokane is an expensive place to live. Living costs exceed the national average by 7 percent.

Is it any wonder poverty and welfare rates in Spokane run about double the rate for the state and far above the rest of America?

This is the shocking picture of poor jobs, low wages, scant benefits and widespread poverty sketched in preliminary findings of a new economic study by national consultants.

The Pace Group of Tupelo, Miss., is conducting the research for the Spokane Area Economic Development Council. The EDC wants to know how it can better organize its efforts to recruit employers who pay higher wages and more benefits. Or at least a paycheck and benefits which beat welfare, which so much work here doesn't.

That's not a statement of opinion.

It's an irrefutable fact.

And there is growing recognition that the business community must change this equation, if the community is to succeed and prosper in the future. Worker wages can be swept under the rug only so long before economic and business strength wither.

John Lovorn, chief executive of The Pace Group, is scheduled to present a peek at preliminary results of research at the EDC's semi-annual meeting today. I don't know what he'll say.

This column is based on a written "interim report" by the consulting group's on-the-spot researcher. Senior Vice President Steve Jenkins characterizes his conclusions as "initial subjective analysis" of a first round of interviews and data gathering.

The final objective is to target the kinds of industries and companies that will thrive and pay their workers well in Spokane. Then the EDC will set out to get these valuable companies to come, rather than continuing the present scattershot approach to growth.

Jenkins says flat out what many have been trying to ignore for years: The Spokane workforce is underemployed.

Here's the evidence in terms of median household income, followed by per capita income:

Spokane — \$22,192 and \$12,375.

Washington — \$31,183 and \$14,923.

Northwest — \$27,897 and \$13,266.

West — \$32,270 and \$15,245.

United States — \$30,270 and \$14,420.

"Spokane lags far behind the state, the region and the nation relative to incomes, thus reflecting some of the causes for the community's poverty levels," says Jenkins.

"Spokane also experiences one of the highest levels of households on public assistance. Eleven percent of Spokane's households receive some form of public assistance compared with 6.7 for the state."

In some cities, says Jenkins, "Lower incomes may be tempered by lower costs of living. In Spokane, this is not the case. Recent cost of living data from the American Chamber of Commerce Research Association indicates that Spokane is a moderate to high cost community in which to live." Overall, living costs here are 106.7 percent of the national average.

Spokane has just 13.8 percent of its work force employed in manufacturing, vs. 18.6 for the state and 19.6 for the nation. We beat the state and nation in employment in low-wage job sectors such as retail and services.

Even then, retailing and services tend to pay less here than elsewhere, probably, I surmise, because the low-income job pool suppresses wage levels — and benefits.

Even in a top paying sector such as manufacturing, Spokane pay is subpar — \$28,334 vs. the state average of \$34,280 and U.S. average of \$32,103.

"Retail trade and services, with (higher paying) health services factored out, represent 45 percent of the employment in Spokane, with a combined average annual wage of \$13,918!" (Exclamation point his.)

But it is Spokane's poverty statistics that are most appalling.

In Spokane, the figures for families living below the poverty level are 12.5 percent vs. just 7.8 percent for the state as a whole, 8.7 percent for the Northwest, 9.3 percent in the West, and 10 percent in the nation.

Researcher Jenkins sums up, "Spokane exceeds the poverty levels for families, persons and children in comparison with the state, the Northwest, the West and the nation."

Spokesman Review

July 26, 1995

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'Work, or else' policy could restore the American way, says Frank Bartel

Livable minimum wage could help eliminate the dole

The poverty rate in America is the highest in 10 years. A recent report shows a wider gap between the rich and poor than in any other industrialized nation.

"People are working harder and not making it," laments U.S. Labor Secretary Robert Reich. "There are growing legions of working poor in this country."

In Spokane, the 3rd Legislative District has the highest welfare rate in the state.

In the nation's capital, Washington Post columnist David Broder decries "compensation policies that have enriched the top percent of Americans mightily in the last 20 years, while the earnings of most working class and middle class workers have stagnated or declined."

Growing numbers of Americans work two or three jobs.

Others turn to welfare. It pays better.

At the same time, Secretary Reich observes, "We are engaged in a great debate of how to get people off welfare and into work. And Americans are starting to disbelieve the American dream."

What to do?

The consensus is that expanded education and retraining will enable the nation's work force to compete more effectively for better-paying jobs in the global economy. But this is long term.

In the meantime, says labor's Reich, "We've got to raise the minimum wage. Not by \$10 an hour. By 90 cents over two years. From \$4.25 to \$5.15."

But the extra pennies hardly seem sufficient to lift working families stuck on the bottom rung of the pay scale out of poverty or liberate unwed mothers from the stubborn clutches of the welfare system.

A better solution, it seems obvious, would be to rise the minimum wage to a truly livable level that enables everyone capable of working to earn enough for all their needs.

That includes health care. Child care. Shelter. And the many other family services now available through endless social programs so costly to taxpayers and destructive of the human spirit that the damage to the fabric of American society is beyond estimation.

Even so, any suggestion of a truly livable minimum wage will be viewed as unpatriotic, anti-business, and obscene by defenders of the existing convoluted and wasteful system of tax collection and wealth redistribution.

Public employees unions, government officialdom and the National Federal of Independent Businesses lobby will automatically protest it can't be done. Could it be their mutual interests are best served by an unskilled labor force cast into perpetual bondage by low-paying jobs and a giant web of grossly cost-inefficient programs?

Granted, adapting to a livable minimum wage would be scary and extremely challenging. It very well may be impossible. Or impractical.

But maybe not.

On the surface at least, the idea embodies exciting potential for reversing America's economic and social decline. In concept, a livable minimum wage could:

- Cut government down to size.
- Put everyone back to work.
- Curb socialism creep.
- Strengthen and reward the private enterprise system.
- Renew the work ethic.
- Restore human dignity.
- And require a best effort by all Americans to earn their

keep instead of living off others and resenting those who work harder and smarter.

The savings to businesses and taxpayers of slashing traditional social services to the bone should easily outweigh the costs.

Entry-level wage minimums could be lower so that beginning workers are required to gain experience and earn their spurs in the workplace.

Similarly, levels of minimum pay might be pegged to classroom training, thus rewarding and encouraging the pursuit of education and skills.

Any unable to secure employment in the private sector would be found work in the public sector — running a computer, sweeping the floor, or mowing the grass for taxpayers.

The goal would be elimination of the dole, except for a relative few medically determined unable to work. Otherwise, no exceptions. Work, or else.

Drastic steps, yes, but the present uncaring manner in which America treats its disenfranchised, most of whom truly do want to work if they can make a living at it, is an international disgrace.

Earning a living wage used to be the American way of life. Restoring it might be worth a shot.

Spokesman Review

July 9, 1995

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Council president proposes “living wage”

By Sherry Jones
of the Missoulian

Companies who get tax breaks or other financial help from the City of Missoula should have to pay their employees at least \$7.50 an hour, City Council President Craig Sweet says.

That's the federal poverty level wage for a family of four, and it's the minimum wage businesses getting city assistance or landing city contracts might have to pay under a “living wage” ordinance making the rounds at City Hall.

“It's mostly aimed at people who are coming to the city, asking for something from the city,” Sweet said. “We are talking about paying somebody a poverty-level wage.”

Sweet's proposal, in tentative draft form, is patterned after a similar ordinance under consideration in St. Paul, Minn., he said. According to New Party national organizer Dan Cantor, St. Paul is one of a growing number of cities with living-wage laws either on the books or being pondered.

“It's a deeply popular issue,” Cantor said. “All but the most conservative or mean-spirited think people deserve a living wage.”

The New Party, an organization committed to progressive issues and political candidates, endorses the living wage concept, Cantor said. Organized labor, too, is working to get living wage ordinances adopted across the U.S., he said.

Milwaukee and Baltimore are the largest cities with living wage ordinances, he said.

The issue sparks controversy wherever it's raised and rankles chambers of commerce in particular, Cantor said.

That's because living-wage ordinances hurt the very people they're purported to help, said Mary Jo Paque, director of government affairs for the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce. The ordinance is too new for her to gauge its effects, she said, but she doesn't think it will bode well for Milwaukee.

“The argument is being made that it's for the good of the lowest paid workers,” she said, “that it'll help them get a decent wage. It's being sold as a benefit for the very poorest.

“It's being portrayed in a deceptive manner.”

But Paque suspects many businesses contracting with the city will have to lay off workers because of the ordinance.

What's more, she said, those that do raise their wages will pass along those costs by charging more for their goods and services. That could mean higher taxes to foot those bills, she said.

“Somebody's got to pay for it,” Paque said.

The Missoula Chamber of Commerce, which hasn't been given a copy of the ordinance yet, no doubt will have similar arguments, Sweet predicted.

“They're going to make it to be the big horror of horrors,” he said. “They're opposed to raising the minimum wage. I can't think of anything more un-Christian than to pay a sub-poverty wage. It's a joke. It's a greed factor for some of these people.”

Sweet, a small business owner who is a member of the New Party, pays his three part-time employees \$6.50 an hour - more than the \$4.25 minimum but less than the proposed “living wage.” One of his workers may become a full-timer, he said; if so, she “would easily make a living wage.”

The city's budget shows all full-time employees earn at least the living wage, but some part-timers are paid a lower hourly wage.

The Missoulian's lowest wage is \$5 an hour.

Sweet's draft ordinance would require employers with contracts, tax breaks, revenue bonds or other city assistance worth \$10,000 or more to pay the living wage to their workers. Some tinkering is likely before the document appears before a council committee, he said. Non-profit agencies might be exempt, for instance, as might seasonal employees.

Even under the draft ordinance, though, few businesses would be adversely affected, Sweet asserted.

“I would imagine the people we contract with, the bulk of them pay a living wage,” he said.

Missoulian
June 7, 1996



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Gary Richardson

Memorial to Frank Steunenberg, former Idaho governor and union member, who was assassinated during Idaho's "mining wars". The statue stands in front of the Idaho state Capitol building.