
Secrecy Shrouds

Federal IWW Raids:

Administration is Silent on Reasons for Spectacular Invasion of Labor Offices

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From *The Call's* Washington Bureau.

WASHINGTON, Sept. 6 [1917].— Officially, the administration has nothing to say today as to what it hoped to find in the papers of the national headquarters of the Socialist Party and in the papers of national and local offices of the IWW, seized in the spectacular raids of Wednesday afternoon [Sept. 5].

Assistant Attorney General Fitts, seen at his office this afternoon, smiled genially and declared that “it is up to the grand juries; we simply have served search warrants issued under the authority of the Espionage Act, and have secured the papers we sought in various places.”

He refused to discuss the reason for seizing papers in any particular office, nor to explain why papers in other offices were not seized. For example, the only IWW office in Arizona visited by the postmasters' agents was that in the little mining camp of Miami. He refused also to explain the nature of the crimes suspected, and concerning which the evidence was sought in these documents.

Some four weeks ago Fitts declared that the federal government was taking no steps against the IWW unless violations of federal law were shown, and that when such violations occurred there would be no delay in making arrests. Today he said that in seizing the papers, “we wanted to find out whether there have been violations of federal law.”

Merely First Step.

Unofficial reports, circulated by the fanatically anti-Socialist press of the capital, declare that the raids of yesterday were merely the first

step in a nationwide sedition hunt by the department. They say that "officials of the department today stated that the campaign includes a surveillance of all organizations suspected of cloaking anti-war propaganda, scrutiny of newspapers and magazines, especially those in foreign tongues, and stenographic reports of pacifist meetings.

One thing seems to be clear — the administration is going to go to the very limit of the autocratic powers given the President in the Espionage Act to crush the IWW in the mining and lumber industries of the West, and is going to do all that it can to disrupt Socialist organizations everywhere by suppression or intimidation of meetings. Hysterical grand juries, in various localities, Impressed by the Burnquist-Lowden tactics, are counted upon to return verdicts which can somehow be used to check the growth of Socialist organization in the United States and reduce the party vote next year.

Close Connection Seen.

How close is the connection between these repressive tactics and the fact that Socialists are responsible for most of the aggressive work done by AF of L unions since the war began has yet to appear. Nor is the connection of the raids with the Senate's fear of a political revolt at its failure to make the profiteers pay for the war yet clearly established.

That these influences have been potent in causing the administration's attempt to discover sedition and possible treason in the camp most bitterly opposed to Wall Street, however, is likely to be brought out when the campaign is further developed.

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Raids Are Timed.

CHICAGO, Sept. 5 [1917].— On recommendation of the Department of Justice, acting in concert with the Post Office Department, the raids on all radical and pacifist organizations throughout the country were conducted simultaneously. The agents in charge of the roundup here are Oliver K. Pagan, indictment expert of the federal service; Milton C. Clabaugh, chief of the Chicago secret service; and Charles F. Clyne, United States District Attorney.

Eight raids were conducted in this city alone. They included the headquarters of the IWW, the home of William D. Haywood, international secretary of the IWW; the home of Harrison Gray and those of Ralph H. Chaplin, Vincent St. John, and John Farley, all connected with *Solidarity*, the IWW organ.

The plant of *The American Socialist* was raided and also the Rogers and Hall printing establishment, where it is published.

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Claim “Bomb” is Found.

DETROIT, Mich., Sept. 5 [1917].— A “bomb” was supposed to have been found in the IWW headquarters here. Just what kind of a bomb, whether powder, dynamite, or gas, the authorities would not divulge. Arrests are expected.

The homes of Sophia Markovich and A.C. Christ, members of the national executive committee [General Executive Board] of the IWW were also raided, as well as the Universal Machine Works, of which Christ is general manager. United States Marshal Behrendt advocated the internment of all IWW for the period of the war.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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