
Injunction Against IWW by the State of Washington

[Jan. 3, 1920]

by D.F. Costello

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Report Made by:

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Place Where Made:

Spokane, Wash.

Date When Made:

Jan. 7, 1920.

Period for Which Made:

Jan. 7th.

Title and Character of Case:

Injunction Against IWW by the State of Washington.

Statement of Operations, Evidence Collected, Names and Addresses of Persons Interviewed, Places Visited, Etc.:

After a four day hearing **Judge [R.M.] Webster** in Superior Court, Spokane, Washington, on Jan. 3rd, 1920, granted the request of the state of Washington for a permanent injunction against the **Industrial Workers of the World**. The decision permanently prohibits any activity of the IWW or its members, especially the carrying on of propaganda, and makes membership a contempt of court. Hereafter any IWW arrested may be tried under its provisions on questions of fact and sentence imposed for contempt of court. Such cases may then be appealed to the State Supreme Court.

Prosecutor **Lindsley** in summing up the case said:

However much they may attempt to disguise the fact, the whole purpose of this organization is to overthrow this government and substitute

for it the governing power of the General Executive Board of the IWW. They would taken from men the competence that they by a lifetime of work have accumulated and give it to those who have nothing except what hangs on their frames, distinguished representatives of which class we have with us here. In 16 different languages they appeal to the ignorant cupidity of those who have no right on our shores except as our guests, tempting them to overthrow this government. They try to make them believe that they are to be put in the places of those who have spent their lives making this country what it is.

These delegates here have taken up this work of the IWW for a consideration, and make their living on dollars filched from the ignorant mass of workers.

I admit there is no precedent for a court of equity to issue such an injunction, but neither is there any precedent for the condition confronting us, and to admit that we have not the power to combat this condition would be to confess shameful impotency.

Judge Webster in granting the injunction declared:

I have no hesitancy in granting the request of the state for a permanent injunction and I want it understood that this is not to be an empty order and that the whole power of this court will be used to enforce it. I know of no reason why I should take this matter under advisement. It seems to me that there can be no difference of opinion. The effort to differentiate between a political and an industrial revolution ought not to

befog an intelligent man.

I might read all their literature, but I should come to no different opinion, for through it all runs clearly the intention to "expropriate," as they term it, the owners of property and put in possession the members of the rank and file.

By "capitalists" they include all who by their industry have acquired property. The average American is not so weak and spineless that this is to be taken away from him without a struggle, and this means bloodshed and violence, and if the physical power lies on the side of the IWW it means the tearing down of all the things in this country that men have fought and died for in the last 100 years and those other things that men and women have struggled for in the last thousands of years. The organization that admits in its plans no conception of right and wrong in so many words harks back to the position of the brute. No man can be entirely human without a conception of right and wrong.

So far as the facts in this hearing are concerned, it is clear enough that the organization plans to overthrow the constitution of the United States, looking to emulate the example of Russia. From what I can learn, Russia was never so subject to tyranny and domination as today. Their literature is solely material elevating the brute in man. It takes away the solace of religion, from the sorrowing and the dying. Never in their books to you find mention of a supreme being. Through it all breathes hatred and malice and venom which can only find outlet in bloodshed. These witnesses, when asked how the bloodless industrial revolution that they advocate was to be brought about, say that that will be determined by the rank and file when the time comes. This indicates to me an unwillingness on their part to state that force is to be used.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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