THE MURDER OF FRANK LITTLE

"An Injury to One is An Injury to All"

by

Will Roscoe

July 1, 1973
"Society today is so complex that we are all dependent upon one another. An injury to one is an injury to all."*

Jeanette Rankin, U.S. Congressperson, in speech to Butte miners at Columbia Gardens, August 18, 1917.

*Missoulian, August 19, 1917.
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PROLOGUE

"First and last warning . . ."
The summer sun climbed over the continental divide, and above the valley plain, a mile high. Rays of sunlight shot into the city clinging to skirts of the big butte and ricocheted off the patchwork of rooftops. On the city's southwest perimeter a wooden trestle straddled converging railroad tracks. The sun warmed the confluence of rails; beads of dew began to evaporate. The black, greasy shale of the railroad bed exuded a tarry odor.

Other workers were only starting to waken by the time Charles Holmes stepped into the sunlight and began walking to his job. He took his regular short cut—two blocks on the city street and then a left turn, onto the county road, passing by the trestle.

It had remained warm throughout the night, providing little relief from the heat of the previous day. The morning was still and sultry. To Charles Holmes, this first day of August promised to be just another sweaty, summer day, like yesterday and the day before.

He reached the dirt road. Now behind him, the sun warmed his back. The dew had evaporated and already the road was dusty—small clouds formed at each footprint. Holmes looked up, directly ahead he saw the trestle.

With the sun still hovering just above the mountains to the east, the figure suspended from the trestle cast a gaunt, elongated shadow for several yards behind it. Charles Holmes stood petrified as it slowly rotated to face him.
In gruesome fascination, Holmes stepped closer. He noticed a card pinned on the body; there were three numbers on it.

A violent wave of nausea overcame him. He turned and frantically started walking.

He did not stop again until he had circled the trestle and could no longer see it. He realized he had been running as he tried to catch his breath.

There were three numbers on the card. Perhaps they were a draft number. That must be it. The poor devil killed himself to avoid the draft.¹

Numbly, he continued to his job.

On his way, he met Emmet Utter, who rented a room nearby, and briefly described to him what he had seen at the trestle.²

It was now 6:00 a.m.; activity in the city was gaining momentum. Robert Brown had left his home on Montana Street and was driving to the small town of Rocker, hauling gravestones. He had gone only five blocks when he passed the trestle.³

Brown telephoned the police station, talked to the Desk Sergeant William Taylor, and then continued to Rocker.⁴

In the meantime, Emmet Utter had returned to his room on Centennial Avenue and talked to his landlord, William Miller, a worker at the nearby Centennial Brewery. Utter told Miller what Holmes had seen and

¹Missoulian, August 3, 1917; Anaconda Standard, August 4, 1917.
²Anaconda Standard, August 4, 1917.
³Missoulian, August 2, 1917; Butte Miner, August 2, 1917; Anaconda Standard, August 2, 1917.
⁴Missoulian, August 2, 1917; Butte Miner, August 2, 1917.
then called the police. Miller, who had had his dogs aroused by some activity in the area of the trestle around 4:00 that morning, walked to the trestle. He found the impressions of a three-chord tire, but they were so obscure he was unable to follow them.

At the police station, William Taylor excitedly related the substance of Brown's call to Police Chief J. J. Murphy. Without hesitating, Murphy immediately bolted out of the station, shouting at others to join him as he went. Lieutenant Mike Dwyer, detective Frank White, patrol driver Ralph Wynne, chauffeur Ed Kimball, and undertaker James Cassidy all followed Murphy, taking the first available patrol car.

Within minutes, the six men arrived at the trestle. At 7:30 they cut the half-inch manila rope; from the opposite side of the trestle, Chief Murphy lowered the body.

Detective White inspected the corpse. He noticed a few minor bruises on the head and legs and a cut just behind the left ear, which indicated to him a blow with a heavy instrument. The body was still warm.

On the right thigh was pinned a six-by-ten-inch placard. In large letters, pressed on with a red crayon, it read:

5 *Anaconda Standard*, August 4, 1917.
7 *Butte Miner*, August 2, 1917; *Butte Daily Post*, August 1, 1917.
8 *Butte Daily Post*, August 1, 1917.
OTHERS TAKE
NOTICE!
FIRST AND LAST
WARNING!
3-7-77

D. C. S. S. W. T.

On the back of the note was a smear of blood.\textsuperscript{10}

Lieutenant Dwyer recognized the body. It was Frank Little.\textsuperscript{11}

Five days later, on August 5, a coroner's jury, of men who worked
or had worked in the copper mines of Butte, Montana, issued its verdict.

We find the deceased died Aug. 1, 1917 at the
Milwaukee Trestle near Centennial Brewery, Silver
Bow County, Mont.

Cause of death. Strangulation by hanging.

We find from the evidence that deceased was
taken from his room 32 Steel block on the morning
of Aug. 1, 1917 by parties of from five to seven
masked men in an automobile to the Milwaukee Trestle
near Centennial Brewery and then hanged by the neck.
The names of the men who committed the crime are
unknown to this jury.

We condemn in the strongest terms the parties
guilty of this unlawful crime.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{10} Arnon Gutfield, "The Butte Labor Strikes and Company Retaliation
During World War I" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Montana, 1967),
p. 33; "Lynch-law and Treason; Lynching of Frank Little in Butte," Literary
Digest, LV (August 18, 1917), pp. 12-13; Bulletin of the Metal Mine Workers'
Industrial Union, No. 800 of the IWW, July 27, 1918; Anaconda Standard,
August 2, 1917.

\textsuperscript{11} Anaconda Standard, August 2, 1917.

\textsuperscript{12} Coroner's Report, Silver Bow County Courthouse.
THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD

"The working class and the employing class have nothing in common . . ."

On June 27, 1905, 186 men met at Brandt's Hall in Chicago to form the organization known as the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). The purpose of the organization, according to Bill Haywood, who later became its leader, was "to confederate the workers into a working class movement that shall have for its purpose the emancipation of the working class from the slave bondage of capitalism."¹

Unionism had been in existence in one form or another since the 1860s. The most predominant and successful union in 1905 was the American Federation of Labor (AF of L), not because of the strength of its policies and ideals, but because it was the most compatible form of unionism to the companies and corporations. Violent labor warfare since the 1880s had taught Samuel Gompers, the AF of L's perennial leader, to be conservative, and not threaten the boss—and it was Gompers' circumspect policies that ensured the AF of L's survival.

Preventing violent conflicts between workers and bosses, however, meant excluding those who would have the AF of L use its organizational powers to force an improvement of living standards from the capitalists. Thus, in 1905, the AF of L embraced only five percent of the American working class—and that five percent was all white, all native born, and all skilled. The rank and file of the AF of L sought to sell itself as

a conservative labor organization. The status quo of the AF of L never complained as long as wages rose and hours decreased, which they did for skilled workers. Samuel Gompers was not going to jeopardize his federation's position by organizing unskilled laborers who were those most exploited by capitalism and most wanted its downfall.²

For the twenty million unorganized workers in the United States, the founders of the IWW wanted their organization to be an alternative. It was a radical union, following the lines of the Knights of Labor, the American Railway Union (which led the bloody Pullman strike of 1894), and the Western Federation of Miners—and it was dedicated to the overthrow of capitalism.³

The IWW became part of a period of American history marked by social ferment. The march of industrialism following the Civil War had increased in extent and momentum yearly, transplanting the American work force from farm to factory, and by 1905, threatening to drastically alter the entire American society. For where technological progress had advanced incredibly social progress had lagged far behind, and at the turn of the century, the industrial worker was still directed by the codes of nineteenth century craftsmen.

Millions of immigrants crowded into the land of promise and found themselves in dark, filthy factories working ten, twelve, and even thirteen hours every day until they collapsed. Along with the emancipated Negroes and poor whites, the immigrants formed a whole new class in America—the

lower class. One-third to one-half of the population lived near starvation; two percent of the population owned sixty percent of the wealth.\textsuperscript{4}

But the American tradition of equality and freedom had created a kind of social conscience, and from this came Populism followed by Progressivism. Government was overhauled; rust scraped and parts oiled. But Progressivism had restricted itself to legislation, and the individual conscience was left untouched.

Child labor laws, workmen's compensation, and the minimum wage for women and children all went unenforced. When hours decreased, so did pay. Initiative, referendum, and recall were unused. Progressivism failed because the real power source in capitalistic America, as a direct result of industrialism, had shifted, and was left untouched by the initial reforms of that era.

That power source was the "company." The company that has the power to buy judges and sheriffs and mayors and representatives and governors and even whole legislatures. The power to call in militia—federal and state—at wish, and the power to control the press.\textsuperscript{5}

Progressivism could not hand freedom and a decent life to the masses—like so many other groups throughout America's history, they had to earn these things themselves. It was against this scenario that the

\textsuperscript{4}William Preston, Jr., \textit{Aliens and Dissenters} (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 36.

\textsuperscript{5}U.S., President, Commission on Industrial Relations, \textit{Industrial Relations, Testimony of William D. Haywood, May 11, 1915} (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1916), pp. 10570–10589. There are many labor disputes which serve as examples of corporate control of government. The Coeur D'Alene strike of 1892, the Leadville strike of 1895, and the Cripple Creek strike of 1903–1904 are among some of the more dramatic. See bibliography for references on these and other strikes.
Industrial Workers of the World appeared. The IWW's preamble clearly states the organization's intentions.

"The working class and the employing class have nothing in common . . . . Between these two classes a struggle must go until all the toilers come together . . . on the industrial field, and take and hold that which they produce by their labor through an economic organization of the working class without affiliation with any political party . . . ." 6

The IWW was also an idealistic organization. William Haywood said at the founding convention, "What I want to see from this organization is an uplifting of the fellow that is down in the gutter . . . ." 7 It was the first union to tell the immigrant worker, the unskilled laborer, the third-class citizen that he had reason to be proud of himself and his class. The rather vague IWW plan to organize all workers into "one big union" and then to hold a general, nation-wide walkout which would force the capitalists to give the means of production to the workers was something the ignorant laborer could believe in. The IWW produced its own authors, playwrights, poets, songwriters, and martyrs.

Among those martyrs was Frank Little.

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FRANK LITTLE

"The Hobo Agitator"
"Half white, half Indian, all IWW." That is the manner in which fellow Wobblies (IWW members) most commonly describe Frank Little. A member of the IWW since its infancy, Frank Little ascended its ranks to the position of chairman of the General Executive Board of the IWW in less than six years. At the time of his death in 1917, he was equally admired and feared throughout Western America. He became the stereotype of a Wobbly organizer; the hobo agitator. Yet his personal life remains obscure—instead Frank Little was a man remembered for his deeds.¹

Frank was born in Oklahoma in 1879. His mother was a full-blooded Cherokee Indian and his father was of Quaker background. His family was completely American and totally radical—three brothers and two sisters were in the IWW movement. His oldest brother, Alonzo, actively organised for the IWW in the Southwest, particularly in Southern California, and participated with a Wobbly army in an abortive campaign for the liberation of Tijuana and the establishment of "the industrial commonwealth." Another brother, Hank, was in jail in Seattle at the time of Frank's death. He had been arrested while making a speech and charged with inciting a riot. Emma Little, wife of Frank's brother, Frederick, wrote songs which appeared in the IWW's news bulletin.²

¹Letter to the author from Patrick Murfin, General Secretary-Treasurer of the IWW, June 5, 1972.

²Ibid.; also see: Coroner's Report, Silver Bow County Courthouse; New York Times, August 2, 1917; Butte Daily Post, August 1, 1917; Anaconda Standard, August 2, 1917; Solidarity [New Castle, Pa.], August 22, 1917.
Frank grew up with a dauntless rebel spirit, and it was his un-turnied independence that led him to become a hard-rock miner. He was tough—well suited for his trade. He had a lean, muscular build, standing five feet, ten inches tall. His face was weather-beaten, yet ruggedly handsome. He had a candid, boyish smile, set on a strong jaw. Despite the fact that only one was of any use to him, Frank’s dark eyes would sparkle with his unfailing good humor; but, if crossed, he would get a wild, unruly look, intimidating to even the bravest. He was hot-blooded and energetic. Frank boasted of being a half-breed.\(^3\)

It was a hard life—being a metal miner. You saw your friends crippled or killed in almost a constant line of accidents. Down in the mines, thousands of feet below sunlight, heat and dust from poor ventilation made tuberculosis and miner’s consumption almost unavoidable—miners were old men at 35. You’d break your back for pay that was just short of being enough to live on. The bosses could lower wages as they pleased, and increase hours just as easily. Blacklisting sometimes made jobs nearly impossible to find. Occasionally conditions would get better, but that was usually when two companies were fighting for control and wanted the miners on their side; when one of the companies had won, conditions were the same again. It didn’t have to be that way, however. There’d be less accidents if the bosses were made to obey safety laws, and you’d think wages could be increased some. The bosses seemed to be making plenty of

profit. But there was nothing that could be done; not unless you wanted to starve, or risk your life trying to fight the boss. 4

Frank Little welcomed that fight. He could never accept the fact that conditions had to be as they were. He could not stand by and see his fellow workers exploited. Frank began to hate the bosses. So the same rebel spirit that led Frank Little to become a metal miner, the same spirit that demanded freedom, led him to join the Western Federation of Miners (WFM) around the turn of the century and try to fight the bosses.

From 1900 to 1905, Frank fought in several major WFM battles. At that time, the Federation was still relatively radical and it was not afraid of direct confrontation with the bosses. But, the bosses always seemed to have an advantage—their detectives infiltrated the union local, they initiated blacklists against union members, and they could provoke the miners into violence and then have federal troops or state militia called in to crush the strike, shoot several of the miners, and do a good job of weakening the union local. By 1905, Frank hated the bosses even more, as well as their capitalism, but he had also learned that violence was just what the bosses wanted, so it should be avoided. 5

Until this time, Frank had been active in the WFM; however, when the IWW emerged in 1905 and the WFM became the first large union to affiliate with it, Frank followed the more radical members of the Federation into the IWW.

4For detailed information on the metal miner's life see Industrial Relations, Report of the Commission on Industrial Relations.

5Dubofsky, We Shall Be All, p. 186; Outfield, "The Butte Labor Strikes," p. 6.
Frank Little was at home in the IWW. It was an organization that not only dedicated itself to the improvement of living standards for the working class but also to the complete overthrow of the exploiting class, replacing capitalism with a workers' society. The Wobbly lifestyle also appealed to Frank—the Wobbly organizer was always traveling to wherever a battle against the bosses might occur. So, in 1906, Frank Little officially entered the IWW and joined in its first major battle at Goldfield, Nevada. 6

Frank still remained in the WFM and attended the convention in 1907 where he represented an Arizona mining camp. Shortly after that, as a result of the schism between the WFM and IWW, he was expelled from the Federation for organizing more for the IWW than for the mining union. The WFM withdrew from the IWW that year. 7

Free to devote all his time to the IWW, Frank earned a reputation as a diligent organizer. Frank scorned talkers, he preferred the philosophy of example. Toward the shortcomings of his fellow workers, however, he was always indulgent. Frank believed wholeheartedly in the working

6 Missoulian, August 2, 1917. The Goldfield mining camp was started in 1904. The WFM was always strong there; several of the mine operators were former members. When the IWW emerged, a local was formed embracing several trades in the town. A few months later, when the IWW and the WFM locals merged, nearly all of Goldfield was organized into one union. This ended, however, when the mine operators and businessmen organized and, by antagonizing the growing schism between the IWW and WFM, greatly weakened the union. The Goldfield experience, however, came to be looked upon as an example of "One Big Unionism." See: Vernon H. Jensen, Heritage of Conflict (Ithica, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1950), Chapter XIII.

7 Jensen, Heritage of Conflict, p. 398.
class and the coming workers' society. His honesty and selfless devotion impressed all who knew him in the IWW.8

Frank always went wherever the fight was; he had the habit of arriving where a leader was needed most—his fearlessness transfused into immobilized workers. He personified the IWW's rebelliousness and its strange compound of violent rhetoric, pride in physical courage, and inevitable use of nonviolent resistance.9

After the Goldfield, Nevada, strikes the next major battle for Frank was in the fall of 1909 at Missoula, Montana—the site of the first free-speech fight held by the IWW in the United States. For seven years following the Missoula incident, the free-speech conflict became the major weapon in the IWW arsenal.

Free-speech fights always followed a pattern. To organize migratory workers, such as the lumbermen in the Missoula area, the IWW agitator found it essential to speak on street corners, advocating an eight-hour day, membership in the IWW, and the workers' society. To discourage the IWW's organizing practices, businessmen exerted their influence on the city council to pass ordinances banning street speaking. In retaliation, the IWW would passively disobey the ordinances, placing men on soapboxes only to be arrested immediately and jailed. The jails soon would be overflowing, the judicial system clogged, and the city council, reluctant to pay room and board for hundreds of men waiting to be tried, would repeal the ordinances. In the process, however, police brutality and intimidation would be applied in attempts to break the IWW's determination and solidarity.

8 Canon, Notebook of an Agitator, pp. 32, 34.
9 Ibid., p. 34; Dubofsky, We Shall Be All, p. 186.
So, although the first free-speech fight was a minor incident, it set a precedent which guided IWW policies, and Frank Little, for the next eight years. When that fight began in September of 1909, Frank was one of the first arrested.

The Missoula confrontation began when 19-year-old Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, famous Wobbly organizer and later chairperson of the American Communist Party, arrived to aid her husband's organizing efforts among the local lumbermen. When outdoor meetings were held protesting some dishonest employment agencies, or "sharks" as they were called, local businessmen pressured the city fathers into arresting the speakers. Police apprehended two men on September 28 and two more the next day—Frank was among them. The four men were jailed for fifteen days when they refused to stop street-speaking. On October 2, the men demanded and received a trial. That evening the four Wobblies pleaded their own case, were found guilty, and sentenced to fifteen days and fined one dollar for court costs. In the meantime volunteers for the fight were pouring in from Butte and Spokane, Washington. On October 8, all the men were released and street-speaking was allowed. The fight was over. 10

The Missoula free-speech fight ended as quickly as it had begun. The Spokane fight was not so short-lived. The fight continued for months during the winter of 1909-1910. Conditions were also much worse than at Missoula. Many men actually starved to death in Spokane jails, while the ones who survived were constantly at the mercy of police who did everything possible to break the Wobblies' spirit and dogged determination. And Frank Little was there. 11

10 Lenora Koebel, Missoula the Way It Was (Missoula, Mt.: Gateway Printing and Litho, 1972), p. 102; Missoulian, October 1, 1909.
11 Solidarity, January 25, 1910; Dubofsky, We Shall Be All, p. 179.
One of the first to arrive, following the initial call for volunteers to join the Spokane fight, Frank had the Declaration of Independence in his hand when he calmly stepped onto the soapbox and began reading. Two lines later, a policeman had grabbed him, saying he was unAmerican. When he was brought before the judge the court magistrate asked him what he had been doing at the time of his arrest. "Reading the Declaration of Independence," Frank said. "Thirty days," replied the judge. Frank spent those thirty days on a diet of bread and water.\(^{12}\)

When the Spokane fight ended in a major Wobbly victory, including the right to speak on the streets and organize the migratory workers in the area, in the spring of 1910, Frank headed for Fresno. Fresno was the center of the fruit harvest section of California; the impoverished harvest workers were perfect subjects for IWW organization. The migratory lifestyle of the harvest worker was something Frank identified with, and he quickly earned the respect of the fruit workers.

Aided by his brother, William F. Little, Frank organized the Fresno local of the IWW. By May of 1910, Frank predicted a full free-speech fight after harvest season; the events of that fall proved him right.\(^{13}\)

Frank Little's determination inspired his fellow Wobblies from the beginning of the Fresno fight to the end. At Fresno, Frank showed how even the potentially violent could employ peaceful resistance. Beginning in the middle of October when he was arrested and sentenced to twenty-five days in jail, he set an example of passive resistance. Refusing

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\(^{12}\) Dubofsky, \textit{We Shall Be All}, p. 179.

\(^{13}\) Letter to the author from Patrick Murfin; Dubofsky, \textit{We Shall Be All}, p. 184.
to work in a chain gang on the county rock pile, Frank spent fourteen days in a dark cell on bread and water instead.  

In jail Frank would pace the cell like a caged animal barely able to control himself. Yet it was Frank Little who prevented the outbreak of violence following the burning, by a group of citizens, of the IWW tent which served as the local's headquarters. By avoiding violence, the Wobblies eventually won the right to speak on the streets of Fresno. 

It was not an easy victory, however. In February of 1911 the fight was five months old when Frank was in Oregon on a change of venue. He argued his own case on the charges of vagrancy which had originally put him in jail and started the fight. It took the jury only four minutes to deliver the verdict of innocent. The fight ended a month later, on March 9, 1911. Under Frank Little's leadership the IWW gained an important victory at Fresno. 

Following the free-speech fight, Frank stayed in Fresno and worked to strengthen the IWW local. In April a new hall was built and social functions were held. Even debates on pertinent subjects, such as the question of the political status of the IWW, were held.

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15 Canon, Notebook of an Agitator, p. 35.

16 Solidarity, February 2, 1911; Renshaw, The Wobblies, p. 87.

17 Solidarity, April 22, 1911. In its early years, the question of whether or not the IWW should act as a political organization arose. In one such debate at Fresno, Little argued the negative. Little also believed that structure of the IWW should be decentralized, on this point he was in disagreement with Bill Haywood. As long as Haywood was the leader of the IWW, the organization remained centralized. Of Haywood, Little said, "You know what the big fellow is like. When Bill makes up his mind about a thing, we are all supposed to toe the line, and we do, or try to—even to not drinking whiskey. Bill calls that teamwork." (Charles A. Madison, American Labor Leaders: Personalities and Forces in the Labor Movement [New York: Frederick Unger Publishing Co., 1962], p. 278.)
That fall, at the Sixth Annual IWW Convention at Chicago, Frank's accomplishments as an organizer received the recognition of his fellow workers. In October, 1911, Frank Little became a national officer of the Industrial Workers of the World; he was elected to the General Executive Board—the governing body of the IWW. 18

His position in the IWW organization well established, Frank easily could have taken an office job and fought the class war from the Chicago headquarters—but Frank hated offices, and he hated big cities even more. Chicago became a kind of home base for Frank as he traveled throughout the Midwest and West—wherever a free-speech fight or a strike would occur. He was now a veteran, almost a legend of Wobbly spirit and doggedness. Frank's presence was an inspiration to downtrodden laborers everywhere. 19

The free-speech fight which occurred at Peoria, Illinois in the spring and early summer of 1913 provides an example of Frank's influence on his fellow Wobblies. The conflict began as a strike at an implement factory. When local authorities began making wholesale arrests of organizers, Frank called for a free-speech fight. On May 22, he was in jail on charges of conspiracy to incite a riot. Thirteen years later, a former Wobbly, James P. Canon, vividly recalled:

... the quieting effect on his entrance into jail ... and the rebuke he gave, in the tone of a father talking to his child ..., as he sat on the bank, calmly chewing his tobacco, to an impulsive lad who wanted to start a "battleship" prematurely. 20

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18 Solidarity, October 17, 1911.
19 Canon, Notebook of an Agitator, p. 35.
20 Ibid.; Solidarity, May 31, 1913; Industrial Worker [Chicago], December, 1972. In forming a "battleship" all the men in a jail cell would march in a circle. Soon, the vibrations from the simultaneous footsteps would literally shake the jailhouse, causing severe damage to its structure.
That summer Frank went north to Minnesota on a propaganda drive for the IWW. Labor relations in Minnesota, especially among the Great Lakes' dock workers and the Mesabi Range's iron miners, were extremely strained. Bosses were working to completely suppress the IWW. Everywhere Frank went, he seemed to be in the center of potential violence—personal danger was omnipresent.

On July 22, while walking alone on the streets of Duluth, several steel company gunmen attacked Frank. He spent the night in the gutter. The next morning, dirty and bruised, he appeared in court to plead innocent to conspiracy charges which had been previously brought against him.  

On August 2 steel company hirelings kidnapped him and kept him in a barnhouse. Three days later at dawn, a party of the striking dock workers and newspaper reporters rescued Frank; that afternoon, he gave a speech.  

Nothing fazéd Frank Little. Even after being beaten and kidnapped, after gunmen dispersed several meetings of the strikers, Frank continued to exhibit a total lack of fear. James Canon, who was with Frank that summer, witnessed an illustrative incident. 

With a pistol in his pocket and his hand on it, we walked for an hour or two around the docks, directly past all the places swarming with gunmen, till we had completed the entire rounds, crossing and recrossing company property many times. . . . He considered it necessary, he said, "to show gunmen we're not afraid, and also to show the strikers we aren't afraid, so they won't be afraid."  

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21 Solidarity, July 26, 1913.

22 Solidarity, August 16, 1913.

23 Canon, Notebook of an Agitator, pp. 34-35.
Frank remained in Duluth for the rest of the summer. That winter he was at Kansas City for the free-speech fight which ended in March, 1914.24

Frank was always one of the more militant members of the General Executive Board; when World War I began in 1914, he vehemently spoke out against it. To Frank Little war was the epitome of the exploitation of the working class. It was the capitalists who started the wars but it was the workers who died in them, while the capitalists enjoyed the profits from wartime industries. Frank once said to Ralph Chaplin, editor of the official IWW news bulletin, "War will mean the end of free speech, free press, free assembly—everything we ever fought for. I'll take the firing squad first!"25

In 1914, Frank also spoke in support of sabotage as a means of direct action. In an IWW pamphlet Elizabeh Gurley Flynn defined sabotage.

> The withdrawal of efficiency . . . either to slacken up and interfere with the quantity or to botch in your skill and interfere with the quality of capitalist production . . . . Sabotage is not physical violence, sabotage is an internal, industrial process . . . it is simply another form of coercion.26

At the IWW convention in September of that year, Frank gave a report on a trip he had made through the Great Plains area and introduced a resolution urging the organization of harvest workers. As a result, the highly successful Agricultural Workers Organization was formed. Members of the AWO practiced various forms of sabotage in the harvest fields and Frank supported this action.27

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24Solidarity, August 9, 1913; August 18, 1913; March 8, 1914.
25Chaplin, Wobbly, p. 196.
26Renshaw, The Wobblies, p. 139.
27Ibid., p. 161; Solidarity, September 21, 1914.
Frank later received much vehement criticism for the stands he took on the war and sabotage in 1914 and 1915. Yet, he always stood by what he had said, no matter how much criticism he received.

In 1916 Frank had returned to the Mesabi Iron Range, organizing a strike among the iron-ore miners there. In July he was arrested on charges of murder. Frank was far from the scene of the crime when it occurred; the charges were quickly dropped and, on the 27th of July, he was released in Duluth. 26

In August Frank was in Michigan raising money for the strikers. While he was there, an incident occurred which was to foreshadow the events of almost exactly a year later. On the 16th of August, a group of local authorities and businessmen arrested him in Iron River, Michigan. He was jailed, beaten, and threatened with mob lynching. He was then placed in a car and a noose was hung around his neck. The only thing that saved him from hanging was the fact that he was an American—the gunmen were looking for "goddamn foreign agitators." Instead Frank was given a staggering blow and shoved out of the car into some bushes. He wandered around the countryside until he arrived at Watersmeet, Michigan, thirty miles away. Rain-soaked and sore, he returned to Duluth by train. 29

The iron-ore miners' strike was cancelled in September, 1916; in November, Frank attended the convention in Chicago. 30

After the convention, Bill Haywood, then the IWW leader, gave Frank his last assignment—organize the metal miners in Arizona and Montana. 31

26 Solidarity, August 5, 1916.
29 Solidarity, September 2, 1916.
30 Solidarity, December 16, 1916.
31 Anaconda Standard, August 2, 1917; Renshaw, The Wobblies, p. 162.
1917

"I'm ready to face a firing squad . . ."
And so Frank Little entered the most important year of his life. It was the year that Frank took his battle against capitalism back to the mining camps where his career had begun more than seventeen years earlier. It was the year that Frank's passionate opposition to the war earned him the venomous hatred of the bosses. It was the year that Frank fought the class war most savagely and bitterly.

Beginning late in 1916, Frank organized tirelessly in Arizona. He established and led the Metal Mine Workers' Industrial No. 500 (MIU) of the IWU, headquartered in Salt Lake City. In Arizona Frank centered his organizing efforts in the copper camps fifty miles north of Phoenix and in Bisbee, only a few miles from the Mexican border.¹

Throughout Arizona the AF of L-affiliated union, the International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers (IUMMSW), was strong but conservative. Therefore, Frank directed his energies not only at the establishment of the IWU but also at the destruction of the IUMMSW. The situation was complicated further by the copper companies which, taking advantage of the union rivalry, encouraged the IWU in hopes of weakening the AF of L. Once the IWU began gaining support from the miners, however, companies used every conceivable method to crush that union in particular.²

¹Anaconda Standard, August 2, 1917; Kershaw, The Wobblies, p. 162.
²Jensen, Heritage of Conflict, Chapter XXI.
As the year progressed, Frank's activities reached a superhuman pace. By March he was speaking in mining camps throughout the state. Early in the month he spoke at the first open-air meeting of the year in Bisbee. In April he organized strikes at the smelter in Humboldt and the mines in Mayer, nine miles away.³

In the April 21 issue of *Solidarity*, the IWW news bulletin, a letter written by Frank appeared. Writing from Arizona, Frank bitterly attacked the old WFM and the bosses of the copper companies.⁴

By early May the strikes at Humboldt and Mayer had been won and Frank devoted his efforts to organizing the miners at Jerome north of Phoenix. On May 25 the Jerome Miners' Union (JMU) affiliated with the AF of L, called a strike. Speaking in Jerome, Frank strongly attacked the JMU and its program to gain the union shop and check-off union dues. The Jerome Miners' Union rejected affiliation with the IWW; but by the 31st of May, under Frank's leadership, the ranks of the miners had become so divided that the strike fell apart. Because the JMU had failed to gain the union shop, check-off union dues, and union recognition, the failure of the strike was claimed as a victory in the IWW campaign to defeat the AF of L in Arizona.⁵

The IWW was gaining strength, threatening Arizona's copper companies. On June 1 Frank was called to Phoenix for an interview with Governor Thomas E. Campbell. Governor Campbell, who had been elected with the

³ *Solidarity*, March 10, 1917; April 14, 1917.

⁴ *Solidarity*, April 21, 1917.


If the JMU won union shop all the miners in Jerome would have to belong to the union, thus excluding the IWW. Check-off union dues would mean that dues would be taken out of the pay-checks of every miner regardless of whether he belonged to the union.
help of copper-company funds, told him that if the IWW continued to agitate in Arizona he would summon federal troops. In return Frank promised a general walkout of all miners, harvest workers, and lumbermen throughout the West. The interview summarily ended in a deadlock.  

From Phoenix Frank went to Bisbee, a small but important frontier copper camp for a meeting of MNU. The IWW local at Bisbee was not yet well-established. Frank knew this fact and also was probably aware that many of the IWW leaders in Bisbee were Thiel detectives, brought into Arizona by the copper companies for the purpose of destroying both the IWW and the IWWSW. With this knowledge, Frank realized that an immediate strike in Bisbee would be injurious and, on June 17, he advised against it. His counsel was ignored when, at a mass meeting a week later, the miners called a strike; on July 2 the miners walked out.  

Shortly following that, Frank had an automobile accident after a night meeting at Bisbee. His ankle was broken and he spent two days in the hospital. The accident was minor, however, compared with the untoward events that his broken ankle saved him from later. Unable to walk for several days, Frank continued to organize in Bisbee while prostrate on a bunk in a miner's cabin. On the 9th of July he issued a bulletin calling for a strike of the fifty thousand harvest workers in the AWO in support of the striking miners.  

Three days later these Bisbee deportations occurred. Organized by the local sheriff and businessmen of the copper industry—under the

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6 Butte Daily Post, July 20, 1917.
7 Jensen, Heritage of Conflict, p. 401.
8 Anaconda Standard, August 2, 1917; Butte Miner, August 2, 1917; Missoulian, July 10, 1917.
auspices of the Bisbee Loyalty League—twelve hundred men were seized, herded into cattle cars, and shipped to the New Mexican desert where they were held for three months in federal stockades. Unknown to the Loyalty League, Frank was still recuperating in the miner's cabin and barely missed being deported.\footnote{Butte Miner, August 2, 1917; Renshaw, The Wobblies, pp. 165-166.}

Frank had to leave Bisbee for a General Executive Board meeting in Chicago, but he did not forget the deportations. For Frank the deportation was a personal matter—the incident further cemented his bitter hatred of the exploiting class. It was Frank Little who convinced Bill Haywood to write a fervent letter of protest to President Woodrow Wilson.\footnote{Anaconda Standard, August 2, 1917.}

This meeting of the General Executive Board was one of the most important ever held by the IWW. It had been called to decide the official policy the IWW was to take regarding the war that the United States had entered early in February. For months the IWW leaders had avoided taking a stand on the war—they were all too aware of what the consequences could be. Ideologically the IWW was opposed to all wars, but an impassioned wave of patriotism was forming across the nation and anyone who opposed the war faced the danger of being drowned in it.

Frank Little, however, never faltered in taking his stand. He hated war as much as he despised capitalism. When the United States declared war on Germany, Frank maintained with the position on the war that he had taken three years earlier. He told the workers to "stay home and fight their own battles with their own enemies—the bosses."\footnote{Dubofsky, We Shall Be All, p. 190.}
Frank was widely respected in his kindness and consideration and earned him many friends in the IWW, but many Wobblies were worried of the effect his stand might have on the organization. In May, Bill Haywood wrote to Frank in Arizona concerning the war. "Keep a cool head; do not talk. A good many feel as you do but the world war is of small importance compared to the great class war." Haywood concluded, "I am at a loss as to definite steps to be taken against the war." 12

But when Frank Little believed in something, no amount of threats or admonitions could change his mind. He felt that the IWW should use all its resources to oppose the war and he went to Chicago ready for a struggle. He was one of the first GEB members to arrive. 13

The arguments at the Chicago meeting continued for days. When Frank stated, "The IWW is opposed to all wars, and we must use all our power to prevent workers from joining the war," another board member replied, "If we oppose the draft they'll run us out of business." To this Frank said, "They'll run us out of business anyway, better to go out in a blaze of glory than to give in. Either we're for this capitalistic slaughterfest, or we're against it. I'm ready to face a firing squad rather than compromise." 14 The meeting finally adjourned—no decision had been reached.

Ralph Chaplin, editor of Solidarity, had been deluged with letters from Wobblies wanting to know whether or not they should register for the draft; he had his own proposal and the board gave him permission to print 12

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12Canon, Notebook of an Agitator, p. 32; Renshaw, The Wobblies, p. 172.

13Canon, Notebook of an Agitator, p. 34; Chaplin, Wobbly, p. 266.

it, but only as an editorial opinion. His suggestion was that Wobblies register for the draft, but after their name sign "IWW opposed to war." Before Frank left Chicago, following the board meeting, he went to Chaplin's office to say good-by. 15

"You're wrong about registering for the draft," Frank said. "It would be better to go down slugging." He lifted one of his crutches and tapped Chaplin on the shoulder; "Don't worry, fellow worker," he said, "All we're going to need from now on is guts." 16

Frank wanted to return to Bisbee—there was still much organizing to be done there—but Haywood had been receiving urgent calls from Butte, Montana, for an organizer. A strike of the copper miners there was a month old and a newly formed union had not yet decided whether to affiliate with a larger union such as the IWW; Frank's specialty was working with hard-rock miners. So, at Haywood's request, Frank left for Butte.

Frank did not forget what had happened at Bisbee—on his way to Butte he passed through Salt Lake City. He stopped there on the 17th of July long enough to send a telegram to Governor Campbell. "The membership of the IWW is tired of the lawlessness of the capitalist class and will no longer stand for such action. If you, as governor, will not uphold the law we will take the same into our own hands. Will you act, or must we?" 17 By the 18th of July, Frank Little was in Butte.

15 Chaplin, Wobbly, p. 209.
16 Ibid.
17 Solidarity, July 21, 1917.
BUTTE, SUMMER OF 1917

"Get the Rock in the Box!"
The conflict in Butte during the summer of 1917 had been developing for nearly fifteen years. Prior to 1903 Butte was considered to be a "Gibraltar of Unionism." Butte miners referred to the era as the "Golden Years." But, in 1917, there were sixteen thousand non-union men in Butte, an open-shop policy, and a blacklisting system that prevented union men from getting jobs.¹

Unionism in Butte began in 1866, about the time the city was founded. In 1870 a union was formed at the threat of a wage reduction; in 1885 it became the Butte Miners' Union (BMU). As a result of the need for a broader union created by the Couer D'Alene strike of 1892, the Butte miners founded the Western Federation of Miners (WFM) in 1893. The Butte union became the WFM's first local and, for many years, its strongest one.²

The reason for the perennial strength of unionism in Butte was due to factors unique to the mining camp—the competition between individuals and between companies for control of the copper mines. When Marcus Daly and William A. Clark fought for control of the hill in the famous "war of the copper kings" labor was something to be bought for one's side, and, when management was split, labor could compromise its differences

¹U.S., Department of Labor, "Survey of Copper Labor Conditions in Montana," by Hywel Davies, Report of Commissioner of Conciliation, July 3, 1918, p. 4, Labor Department File 33-1703, Department of Justice Record Group 60. (Hereinafter referred to as: U.S., Department of Glasser File, . . . .)

and present a united front. The union got what it wanted: safety measures in the mines, compensation in accidents, less hours, and more pay.  

By the time Daly died in 1900 nearly all the mining property in Butte had amalgamated, coming under the control of the Anaconda Copper Mining Company, owned by Standard Oil. There still remained one other force on the scene, however, F. Augustus Hienze. Hienze gained his fortune by leeching off of ACM mines. He had two judges bribed, so that every time the ACM brought a case against Hienze a decision was made in his favor. Hienze also enlisted the support of the workers. By initiating several reforms advantageous to labor, he became popular among the miners. The union continued to prosper.  

In 1903, however, to stop Hienze's leeching, the ACM closed every enterprise that it owned in the state; four-fifths of the state was out of work. A special legislative session was called and a law to curtail Hienze's operations passed. By 1906 Hienze had succumbed, and labor's "Golden Years" in Butte were over.  

Beginning in 1900 the ACM worked to destroy the Butte Miners' Union. Company detectives began infiltrating the union and a split between radical and conservative elements in the union was developed.  

In 1912 the Company inaugurated the infamous rustling card system, designed for the hiring of "... the most responsible men, and men who ... are not disturbers and agitators." In the rustling card system every man

6 Ibid.
had to appear at a central office where he would receive an application
blank asking for his name, address, age, birthplace, citizenship, trade,
marital status, and places of previous employment. There was also a test
for literacy. The Company would check with former employers of the ap-
plicant, to see if he had ever complained of his working conditions. The
Company would check to see if he was a member of a union and to see if he
had voted the right political ticket. And then, if the Company saw fit
to do so, it would issue to the man a rustling card, entitling him to
apply for a job with a mine foreman. If for some reason the man was
fired, his rustling card was withdrawn by the Company—he would be unable
to find another job in Butte.  

By 1914 the ranks of the union were widely split. The men despised
the rustling card and probably would have struck against it, except, by
this time, the majority of union leaders were company men. In June of
that year the miners rebelled, bombing the Union Hall and destroying the
entire union organization. From that date until exactly three years later,
Butte was run open shop.  

Conditions in Butte in 1917 were not good, and as a result tensions
among the miners were creating an explosive situation. Accidents occurred
frequently; in one three-year period nearly 600 miners suffered serious

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7Charles Merz, "The Issue at Butte," The New Republic, XII (Sep-
Congress, House, Speech by Jeanette Rankin, August 7, 1917, Congressional
Record, LV, p. 5897. Miners in Butte learned to be resourceful in obtaining a rustling card when they ordinarily would be unable to. Often the
name of a dead miner, or a very common name, such as Sullivan, was used
when applying for a card. [Harrison George, The I.W.W. Trial [New York:

injuries, 160 died, and there was no compensation for accidents. Miners seldom were shown safety exits. Due to poor ventilation in the mines, tuberculosis accounted for up to twenty-seven percent of all deaths in Butte.

The factor causing the most discontent, however, was pay. Miners' wages in Butte were based on the fluctuating price of copper. For example, a wage of $4.75 was paid if the price of copper was twenty-seven cents a pound. If the price of copper fell, however, wages fell; twenty-five cents for each two cent drop. Supposedly wages were to increase if the price of copper increased, but in June of 1917 the price of copper rose five cents, with no increase in wages to the miner.

The cost of living in Butte was high. The highest in Montana and twenty-eight percent above the nation-wide average. The standard of living afforded by Butte wages hovered between the minimum subsistence level and the minimum comfort level. Eighty percent of Butte families had deficits.

The American entry into the war raised the demand for copper—production increased, quality of working conditions decreased; profits increased, pay did not. In addition to this, a large immigrant population

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10 METAL MINE WORKERS' STRIKE BULLETIN, n.d.


in Butte not only opposed the newly initiated draft, but even the United States' involvement in the first place. Tension was so strong, it seemed almost suspended in the hot summer air. Butte was simmering with discontent.\textsuperscript{14}

Early in June, at the request of Burton K. Wheeler, then federal District Attorney for Montana, a company of the Montana National Guard was stationed near Butte. On June 5, a small anti-conscription riot occurred.\textsuperscript{15}

On June 8 the worst mining disaster in Montana's history broke the state of trepidation among the workers.

\textsuperscript{14}Toole, Twentieth Century Montana, pp. 143-145.

\textsuperscript{15}Missoulian, June 6, 1917; Gutfield, "The Butte Labor Strikes," p. 8.
THE SPECULATOR DISASTER

"Let's Have a Union!"
The night shift had begun at the Speculator Mine, a property of the North Butte Mining Company. There were 415 men working in the stifling heat of the mine. Involved in their various activities, the miners were scattered along 360 miles of track on the several levels.¹

In the main shaft, a crew was in the process of lowering a heavy power cable when the ropes broke and the cable fell, crashing into timbers and water pipes, to the bottom of the shaft. The load casing of the cable was broken and nearly fifty feet of the tar insulation was exposed. It was around 8:00 p.m.²

At 11:30 four men were trying to locate a part of the cable in order to fasten it to the cage (shaft elevator) and then hoist it out of the shaft. Ernest H. Sallau, mine foreman, was carrying a carbide lamp. In holding the lamp out into the shaft, the flame was brought into close contact with the cable—the tar insulation exploded into flames.³

In seconds the timbers in the shaft were afire. Within fifteen minutes the men were forced to abandon their efforts to extinguish the


flames.\textsuperscript{4} By that time, all warning signals had failed. Sallau and the others alerted as many workers as they could.\textsuperscript{5}

The fire spread quickly, roaring through the ventilation shafts.\textsuperscript{6}

By 12:10 the 1200 and 1600 foot levels had filled with smoke. On the 2600 a small group of miners received warning of the fire and climbed through a manway to the 2400. There they were joined by a few other men who were running from the fire. The group consisted of twenty-nine men. They went into a drift and built a partition of timbers and mud and clothes to keep the gases out, and remained there for thirty-six hours.\textsuperscript{7}

Another group of eight built a bulkhead on the 2200, and another nineteen did so on the 2600 foot level. One group of miners spent fifty-five hours in a drift, waiting for help.\textsuperscript{8}

At ground level, above the top of the shaft, the buzzer calling for the cage frantically rang again and again and then abruptly stopped. Two men in the cage, which appeared at the surface, were cremated before the eyes of the horrified surface crew. Flames were erupting out of the shaft, roaring hundreds of feet into the air, becoming a torch visible throughout Butte.\textsuperscript{9}

\begin{footnotes}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid., pp. 17, 35.
\item Montana, Third Biennial Report of the Department of Labor and Industry 1917-1918, p. 22.
\item Ibid., pp. 27, 30; George, The I.W.W. Trial, p. 110.
\item Toole, Twentieth Century Montana, p. 145; Jensen, Heritage of Conflict, p. 432.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotes}
Many of the miners received no warning at all. In the thick smoke, others ran the wrong direction, into the flames. Running from the fire, several of the men were stopped by metal bulkheads, erected to prevent trespassing into adjoining mines, that blocked their escape. Their charred bodies were found piled against the bulkheads.  

A crowd, of wives and children and friends, began to gather around the burning Speculator mine. Sullenly, intensely they watched; they did not move when the flames subsided; they did not move even when all of the 164 bodies had been removed days later.  

Grief enveloped Butte. J. M. Posis, a worker and INW member, arrived in Butte shortly after the disaster and witnessed the mourning.

I walked up from the depot to the main part of town. Going up one of the main streets, I noticed a big crowd standing in front of a lighted up establishment, and I asked some of the people passing by—"What is going on over there?" "Why," they says, "that is an undertaking establishment; there are a lot of dead miners laying in there." I says, "Are you allowed to go in there?" They says, "Yes, anybody can go in" . . . and I went in.  

Now, outside were a lot of men, miners, a lot of women and children, lots of them crying as I went in. I should judge fifty dead miners were laying in there, and I don't think there was a man over thirty-five years old among those dead miners. I went through there and I looked. There was one body covered with a white sheet; the man in charge was showing this body to two other people and I took advantage of the situation . . . . From the upper jaw down through the neck was all blown away; and the eyeballs were laying out of the cheek . . . . Over on the other side of the place were about twenty other miners, young fellows, all burned and charred; some had little black specks on them like there was an explosion of some kind.

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11 Toole, Twentieth Century Montana, p. 432.
There were three bodies not covered up. The hands of these miners were worn down to the second knuckle on their fingers, the bone sticking out; and they stated to me, that those men were found at the bulkheads . . . .

The Speculator disaster triggered a walkout among the miners. Of the three miners' unions in Butte at that time, none had more than a couple hundred members. The strike started completely spontaneously. By June 11, the Elm Orlu mine had to be closed and many other mines had only partial crews. On June 12 a bulletin appeared on the streets of Butte; its headlines announced: "Miners, Attention!, Let's Have A Union."

It called for a strike and made six demands:

1. Abolition of the rustling card system.
2. Unqualified observance of state mining laws.
3. Discharge of the State Mining Inspector.
4. Recognition of the constitutional rights of free speech and assemblage.
5. Supervision of hiring by a union committee to prevent blacklisting.
6. Increase of wages, in proportion to the cost of living.

Following a peaceful parade on June 13, the miners met to form the Metal Mine Workers' Union (MMWU). One thousand men signed the original charter.

The three local newspapers, two in Butte and one in Anaconda, all owned by the Anaconda Copper Mining Company, began an immediate attack on the new union. The newspapers attempted to portray the union as an outrageously radical organization. The same day that the union was formed, the mine operators issued a statement denouncing the union and refusing

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12George, The I.W.W. Trial, p. 81.
to deal with the "anarchistic element" in it. Although the union's leaders, Tom Campbell and Joe Shannon, were both former Wobblies, the Metal Mine Workers' Union never had IWU connections of any sort.  

On June 14 the mine owners refused to meet with a committee of miners belonging to the MMWU. The union then held a mass meeting; the miners voted to extend the strike, to request B. K. Wheeler to send a representative of the Department of Labor, and to petition for a labor organization from the United Mine Workers of America (UMW).  

The MMWU grew daily. On June 18 the strike expanded as the twelve thousand striking miners were joined by the electricians who struck against Montana Power Company and later the ACN. The electricians' union, under the leadership of William F. Dunne, had been contemplating a strike and when the miners walked out they, too, presented demands to the company. Two conferences had been held before the electricians' strike began, but they failed to produce any results.  

The next day the strike gained even more momentum as the Silver Bow Trades and Labor Council, the central body of organized labor in Butte,  

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14 U.S., Department of Justice, "The Butte Miners' Strikes 1917-1920," by Glasser, Glasser File, pp. 27-28; Missoulian, June 14, 1917. When a detective, who had been reporting on the MMWU meetings for the North Butte Mining Co., asked an IWU organizer if he thought the mining union would ever affiliate with the IWU, the organizer replied, "No, never." Many members already had cards in both unions, but this was as close to IWU connections as the union had. (Unsigned detective report, July 25, 1917; Exhibit in the Oscar Rohn Case, Box No. 7, of boxed collection of Montana Council of Defense Papers, Montana Historical Library, Helena, Montana. Although the report is unsigned, the detective's name was probably Warren Bennett, according to the statement of Oscar Rohn, in the same location.)  


16 Missoulian, June 19, 1917; Gutfield, "The Butte Labor Strike, p. 19; Tompkins, The Truth About Butte, p. 36. In terms of interlocking directorships and stock control, the ACN and MFC were so closely linked, it dealt with the two companies as one.
endorsed the strike. This announcement was followed by endorsements of
the MNWU by four different trades unions. On June 22, federal mediator
William H. Rodgers arrived in Butte.\(^{17}\)

Rodgers' efforts in Butte can best be illustrated with the state-
ment printed by the strikers a month after his arrival: "Did we say
'Federal Mediator'? We meant Federal Strike Breaker!"\(^{18}\) Rodgers, aware
of the wartime demand for copper, worked to return the miners to their
jobs as the first step toward settlement. For the miners, however, all
Rodgers could promise was to use his influence in Washington to help gain
reforms. His approach to the situation earned him the full support of
the Company. Rodgers rarely conferred with the miners; his letters to
the Secretary of Labor show a complete lack of understanding of the miners'
situation. As the strike continued, Rodgers worked with the Company, to
undermine the miners' strike by convincing the AF of L unions, which had
joined the miners, to return to work.\(^{19}\)

Throughout June the strike continued to grow. On June 28, fifteen
thousand men were on strike. The attack on the union and its leaders by
the Company press also continued.\(^{20}\)

In addition to the onslaught by the newspapers, the ACM promoted
a campaign of intimidation among the strikers. The "Home Guard" was

\(^{17}\textit{Missoulian, June 23, 1917; Miners' and Electrical Workers' Joint}
\textit{Strike Bulletin \#2}, June 23, 1917.\)

\(^{18}\textit{Joint Strike Bulletin}, July 9, 1917.\)

\(^{19}\text{U.S., Department of Labor, B. M. Baruch to William B. Wilson,}
Secretary of Labor, June 30, 1917, Department of Labor File 30-493, Glasser
File; U.S., Department of Labor, William H. Rodgers to William B. Wilson,
July 25, 1917, Department of Labor File 33-493, Glasser File.\)

\(^{20}\textit{Missoulian, June 29, 1917.}\)
formed with headquarters on the sixth floor of the Henessey Building, also
site of the ACM offices. The ranks of the Home Guard consisted of gunmen,
brought into Butte by the Company. The ACM also supplied their arsenal—
guns sent into the city by the carload. Members of the Guard patrolled
the streets in automobiles; several strikers received beatings. The most
infamous of the gunmen was a man named Billy Gates—he sported a hook,
the kind used for bailing hay, at the wrist of where his hand should have
been. 21

Early in July efforts to affiliate the Metal Mine Workers’ Union
with the AF of L were increased. On July 8 the union was addressed by
three high officials of the AF of L. By July 11, the MINWU was ready to
affiliate. A charter had been prepared and its signing seemed assured
when a personal representative of Charles Moyer, president of the IUNMSW,
informed the miners that they must join the union individually and abandon
the MINWU. By a vote of fifteen to one the miners rejected affiliation
with the AF of L. 22

On July 13, the miners’ position was greatly weakened. On a tac-
tical move, the Company granted the electricians’ demands. Thus, the
electricians, followed by the blacksmiths, machinists, and boiler makers,
returned to work. The solidarity of the striking workers in Butte had been
broken. 23

21 George, The I.W.W. Trial, pp. 19, 85; Joint Strike Bulletin,
July 9, 1917; Interview with J. R. (person who wishes to remain anonymous),
various dates in May, 1972.


23 Missoulian, July 14, 1917; U.S., Department of Justice, "The Butte
Miners’ Strikes 1917-1920," by Glasser, Glasser File, p. 32.
Five days later, the Anaconda Copper Mining Company made its next move. Before the Metal Trades Council—a state-wide organization consisting of locals in Butte, Anaconda, and Great Falls—the Company presented what it claimed to be its final offer to the miners. The Trades Council voted to present the contract offers to the fifteen locals across the state, each local having one vote. The Company's offer promised at best a slight wage increase (in some cases the increase was only a quarter a day), based on a sliding scale according to the price of copper. The offer also promised a slight revision of the rustling card system. 24

Thus, on July 18, with electrical workers returning to work and with the offer of a slight wage increase tempting miners who had been without pay for over a month to return to the mines and to abandon their fight against the rustling card, the success of the strike and the MMWU was uncertain. In addition to this, after a month of striking, the possibility of violence was increasingly likely. These were the circumstances Frank Little faced when he arrived in Butte July 26, 1917.

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24 Joint Strike Bulletin, July 23, 1917. According to rumors, the Company had two more offers ready—one which would abolish the rustling card system. The Company's offer was made to the "miners of Butte" not to the MMWU. The Metal Trades Council represented several other trades connected with mining, but not the miners of Butte. The acceptance of the offer would further isolate the striking miners.
TWO WEEKS IN BUTTE

"I am fighting for the solidarity of labor."
Seventeen years of labor organizing had been hard on Frank Little. When he arrived in Butte, he was 38 years old—he might as well have been 50. His body carried the wounds of every battle Frank had been in since he had entered the class war. On crutches with a broken ankle, in constant pain from a double rupture received when he was thrown down and jumped on by a gunman in El Paso, Texas, and suffering from rheumatism, Frank was a bitter man.  

Frank's arrival occurred on a Wednesday. The same day he rented a room in the Steele Block on Wyoming Street. Next door was Finlander Hall, headquarters of the Metal Mine Workers' Union, where Frank was to make many speeches.  

On July 19 Frank made his first speech to the Butte miners. Frank was not eloquent; his speeches were simple, straight-forward, and forceful. Hard-rock miners respected Frank's aggressiveness and listened when he spoke. His first speech in Butte, at the ball park on Second Street, was characteristic of the others he was to make. It was one of the most bitter attacks on war and on capitalism of Frank's career. When Tom Campbell, president of the MMWU, introduced Frank that night, he told the crowded grandstands that within labor circles he could personally vouch for him. Frank stepped onto the podium to speak, his body supported by crutches, his face bearing the pains of his wounds.

1Solidarity, August 4, 1917; George, The I.W.W. Trial, p. 21.
2Anaconda Standard, August 2, 1917.
I had an interview with the governor of Arizona June 1. The governor asked me what we would do, if the companies did not yield to our demands. I told him we would call every man out of the mines. Then he said that if we did, that he would place them under Federal control. I laughed and told him that we would call out every worker in the country, agricultural workers, lumbermen, munition workers, miners, mechanics, and all classes of working men. He said, "Why, man, you wouldn't do that. This country is at war." I said, "Governor, I don't give a damn what country your country is fighting, I am fighting for the solidarity of labor."  

Rain fell on the ball park. Frank lifted his face toward the sky.

Oh, men, if this rain could only descend upon that bull pen in the hot, dry, sun-parched deserts of Arizona, and bring some relief to the 2000 noble men, held there by the uniformed federal thugs, it would be appreciated.

Frank concluded.

With 50,000 workers in the agricultural fields demanding their rights, with 45,000 men in the logging and lumber camps on strike, and with thousands of men in the copper mining camps of the U.S. out, we will give the soldiers of the U.S. so much to do at home in the next few months, they will have no chance to go to France.

The local press quickly attacked Frank Little. The story of Frank's speech which appeared in the morning papers was preceded with inflammatory headlines.

Soldiers Called  
"Armed Thugs"  
Frank Little, Arizona Strike Leader,  
Practically Threatens  
U.S. Government With  
Revolution . . .

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3 Butte Kiner, July 20, 1917.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
As the Butte newspapers further developed their campaign against him, every scurrilous journalistic device was employed—from editorials to quoting out of context, to obvious misquoting. 7

Frank's official capacity in Butte was to convince the MMMU to affiliate with the INW. He was given the opportunity to speak to the union as were other representatives of organized labor, but he was the only organizer allowed to speak at the closed meetings of the union. Every day the MMMU would hold a meeting at Finlander Hall and every day Frank would hobble next door to attend them. 8

At the daily meeting on the 20th of July, Frank spoke to the members.

I hope some of the prostitutes of the press are present to hear me when I say that the soldiers that were brought into Colorado to quell the strike were nothing but uniformed thugs. They were brought in for the one purpose of shooting down women and children. 9

Frank also remarked on the draft.

7Butte Miner, July 20, 1917; Gutfield, "The Butte Labor Strikes," p. 31. Little's statement concerning federal soldiers became infamous. William F. Dunne, editor of the independent Butte Bulletin, in testifying before the Montana Council of Defense, however, denied that Little ever made the statement. The Montana Council of Defense was a citizens' commission to co-ordinate patriotic activities throughout the state. Given legal powers in 1918, the Council banned undesirable books and even called prominent men (notably B. K. Wheeler and W. F. Dunne) for an "inquisition" into their "loyalty." (Testimony of hearings held at the State Capitol, Helena, Montana, May 31, June 1-2, 1918, by the Montana Council of Defense, in connection with the arrest of Von Waldra, alias Charles Stone, by federal authorities, and also in connection with an investigation of the charges against Oscar Rohn, typewritten manuscript in Box No. 7 of boxed collection of Montana Council of Defense Papers, Montana Historical Library, Helena, Montana, p. 1349.)


Let the capitalists fight the battles and we will go into the munitions plants and see that they get plenty of bullets.
If the boys are properly organized they can get $6 for eight hours' work and later get 5 hours' work for even better pay. They can still continue this until they have the officials on the sixth floor down below with a muck stick.
It is absurd for the international unions to give the companies 60 days' warning of a strike. Solidarity strikes without warning. The International Mill and Smelter Workers claim a membership of 600, but I'll bet 500 of them are gunmen.  

On the 23rd of July, in a debate at the daily meeting, Frank urged the use of pickets. He knew the effectiveness that pickets could have in deterring men from scabbing. Few men could tolerate many days of the abuse that pickets could shout at them. A decision on the subject, however, was left to an investigating committee. Ed Basset, a MEWU official, defended Frank, whose speech at the ball park had made him the center of controversy, telling the miners that Frank came from "the best kind of Americans."

The controversy surrounding Frank, that from which Ed Basset had defended him, had already spread beyond the Butte city limits. On the 24th of July, at the urging of the Montana Council of Defense, Burton K. Wheeler assigned several agents to investigate Frank, to see if charges could be brought against him.

On the 25th of July Frank spoke at a closed meeting of the Metal Mine Workers' Union. He told the members that sending resolutions to

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11 A scab is a man brought in by a company to work during a strike. A scab can also be a fellow-worker of the strikers, who continues to work. Anaconda Standard, July 24, 1917.
the Congress and to the President was a waste of time; instead he ad-
monished them to continue with their own battle and to win it themselves,
joining the revolution against capitalism. He urged them to take action
to keep other miners from scabbing and he ended his speech with an at-
tack on the AF of L.  

The following day—Thursday, the 26th—Frank again spoke, telling
union members, "I am an INW, and as an INW I am responsible for what I
say." He attacked trade unionists and again urged for action against
scabs. At his suggestion the union passed a resolution calling on all
the AF of L unions in Butte to join the strike or to be declared scabs.

However, Frank did not think that resolutions were sufficient to
prevent scabbing. He knew that, if even a handful of men at each mine
continued to work, the mines could be kept open and the Company could
outlast the strikers. The only way in which the strike could be won was
by the complete closure of all the mines. A committee of Finnish women
came to Frank and suggested that picket lines of the women be established.
Frank accepted their advice and on the 27th of July pickets appeared in
Butte. The women were fairly effective, and in some cases they even beat
a couple of men who were unwilling to return the blows.

At the daily meeting on the 27th the miners further discussed the
matter of pickets. That morning was the first day the women picketed.
The majority of those in attendance favored the picketing, although Dan

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16*Anaconda Standard*, July 27, 1917; July 28, 1917; July 29, 1917. The eventual failure of the strike was due, at least in part, to the fact that the mines were marginally worked throughout most of the strike.
Shovlin, chairman of the meeting, expressed doubts. Shovlin, afraid of an outbreak of violence, said that it was that kind of action that had brought the downfall of the old Butte Miners' Union in 1914. On the same evening, Frank made his last speech before a mass IWW meeting.\(^1^7\)

In that speech Frank told the union members of his experiences at the Fresno free-speech fight. He addressed himself to the ordinance which banned street speaking.

The ordinance was just a piece of paper which could be torn up and the same can be said of the Constitution of the United States. Arriving in Spokane I was advised not to speak on the streets. I had the Constitution of the United States and spoke two lines when I was thrown in jail and fed on bread and water.

The laws were made by Congressmen and Senators, not workers; four years ago every house had Wilson's picture "as he kept us out of war," but last February when we entered into war he told the people to "shut their mouths, we're running this" and he said no one could be had to fight except by the draft.

The Industrial Workers of the World don't have trouble enlisting soldiers. We enlist 100 to Wilson's one. The only way the IWW can refuse to go to war is to organize into one big union and fight the capitalists. The IWW did not object to war, but the way they want to fight is to put all the capitalists in the front trenches and if the Germans did not get them the IWW would. Then the IWW would clean up the Germans. The capitalists are our worst enemies.\(^1^8\)

On July 28, Frank continued to advocate pickets, telling the men to use the techniques of the free-speech fight: let the pickets be arrested until the jails are filled with men and then refuse bonds and pay no fines until the city yields. On July 29, following a mass meeting at the bull park, Frank spoke to about two hundred men on the next step in the strike program.\(^1^9\)

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\(^1^7\) *Anaconda Standard*, July 28, 1917; August 2, 1917.

\(^1^8\) *Butte Daily Post*, July 28, 1917.

\(^1^9\) *Anaconda Standard*, July 29, 1917; July 30, 1917.
July 30 and 31 passed quietly. The electricians had struck again and the outlook was better for the striking miners. On the 30th, Frank wrote to Bill Haywood informing him of the conditions at Butte. He told Haywood that he expected his stand on the war might someday cost him his life. In reference to the Butte strike, the letter concluded with the words, "We've got what it takes."

As of the 31st of July, Burton K. Wheeler's investigation of Frank Little had failed to uncover anything for which Frank could be prosecuted. On that day, however, Wheeler went to the office of L. O. Evans, chief legal counsel for the ACM. Wheeler asked Evans about a speech he had made in which he said Wheeler should prosecute Little.

... I went up to the 6th floor of the Hennessy Building to the Anaconda Company's office. It seemed to me there was something unusual going on around the place. They of course had guards around the offices. I walked into Evan's office and said, "I understand you made such and such a statement." He admitted he had. I showed him the speech Little had made and said to him, "You are a good lawyer. Now you tell me under what provisions of the Sition Law I can prosecute him." He didn't look at the law but he said, "Well, some district attorneys have prosecuted." I said, "I don't care what others may have done, but you tell me under what provision I can prosecute him and I will do it." Of course he couldn't tell me because nothing that appeared in the papers came under the provisions of the law.

On the same evening, Frank was walking to his boarding room when he met Conn Lowney, a local barber and an IWU. Lowney owned a barber shop at the end of the Anaconda road which the miners used to go to and from

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22Canon, Notebook of an Agitator, p. 35.

the mines, and across the street from a bar frequented by Irish miners. Lowney's barbershop was part of a grapevine; very little happened in Butte that Conn did not hear of beforehand. On this particular evening, Conn had just heard a rumor that involved Frank. According to the rumor a vigilante party was being formed that night; its subject—Frank Little. Frank laughed and continued to his room in the Steele Block.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{24}Interviews, various dates in May, 1972, with F. M. and J. R. persons wish to remain anonymous). Conn Lowney is not to be confused with J. C. Lowney, an anti-IWW union man who then resided in Butte.
THE MURDER

"We are officers and we want Frank Little."
The sun lingered on the horizon. Slowly, and then with increasing speed, darkness settled. Gradually, the various degrees of stillness accompanying night descended over the streets of Butte, until the hours past midnight brought the magnified quietude which intensifies and reverberates the slightest sound.

A black Cadillac slipped out of a livery barn at the foot of the hill. Deliberately and sluggishly it passed through the maze of streets and intersections, heading north, on Wyoming Street. Geared low, the engine's muted approach could be heard for blocks. Occasionally, the automobile's dark surface reflected dully the amber light of a passing street lamp. Its top was closed, the curtains carefully pulled shut. Finally, it neared its destination and slowly coasted to a halt, next to the sidewalk, headed uphill.

The engine left softly idling, six figures emerged from the car. One remained outside to nervously pace up and down the sidewalk, the other five entered the boarding house located at 316 North Wyoming Street. All wore dark suits and caps; their faces concealed by grotesquely shaped masks.

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1 George, The I.W.W. Trial, p. 21.
3 *Anaconda Standard*, August 4, 1917.
The five men moved concertedly and efficiently. They entered the darkened hallway. Without hesitation, they proceeded to Room 30, on the ground floor, and kicked in the door. It broke in three places. The room was empty.4

The sound of the breaking door abruptly awoke Mrs. Nora Byrne, the middle-aged landlady, in the adjoining room. From the hall she heard a muffled voice: "There is a mistake somewhere." Creeping, she found the switch and turned on the electric light bulb.5

She heard footsteps approach her room. Slowly her door creaked open until it stopped against the bed set beside the door. A revolver appeared in the opening. Mrs. Byrne could not see the hand holding it. Terrified, she demanded, "Who are you and what do you want?" A voice replied, "This is the woman," and the gun withdrew.6

Another voice stated, "We are officers and we want Frank Little."7

"Wait till I get my clothes on." She donned a robe, walked into the next room, her office, and opened the door. A flashlight glared into her face. Squinting, Mrs. Byrne could see five men. One of them said, "Where is Frank Little?"8

"He is in Room 32."9

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4Missoulian, August 2, 1917; Anaconda Standard, August 4, 1917.
6Anaconda Standard, August 4, 1917.
7Ibid.
8New York Times, August 2, 1917; Butte Miner, August 2, 1917; Anaconda Standard, August 4, 1917.
9New York Times, August 2, 1917.
The men went to Room 32, the one next to the room originally visited; the landlady closed her door and finished dressing. One of the men remained by her room.

At Room 32, a man shouted, "Open that door!" A moment passed; then, using their shoulders, the door was broken. Frank was reaching for his watch when they grabbed him. He was gagged with a towel and dragged from his room, wearing only a light suit of summer underwear.\textsuperscript{11}

As they were making their way through the hallway, Mrs. Byrne switched on a light. The men were startled momentarily; then one said, "It's only the woman," and they continued. Mrs. Byrne opened her door slightly and peered into the hallway. She could see Frank being half-led, half-carried. The only sound made was the men's shoes shuffling on the wooden floor.\textsuperscript{12}

As they reached the sidewalk, Frank began to struggle; he had to be carried. Frank moaned once and was shoved into the back with three of the men.\textsuperscript{13}

The car drove north.\textsuperscript{14}

Mrs. Nora Byrne returned to her bed perplexed. Why would officers wear masks, break down two doors, and then take a man out in his nightclothes? It certainly didn't make any sense. But then she remembered

\textsuperscript{10} Anaconda Standard, August 4, 1917.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.; Butte Miner, August 2, 1917.

\textsuperscript{12} New York Times, August 2, 1917; Butte Miner, August 2, 1917.

\textsuperscript{13} Butte Miner, August 2, 1917.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
rumors she had heard that officers were going to deport members of the IWW. They might be wearing masks. There was the answer. Or was it?  

Two other roomers, Dave Jenkins and Hugh Wilson, had also been aroused, and they came to see what had happened. They met their landlady in the hallway.  

"Isn't it terrible? They took Little and deported him!"  

At her roomer's urging she inspected Frank's room. There did not seem to be any sign of a struggle. Frank's clothes had been thrown aside, and his watch was on the floor. His crutches remained propped against the bed.  

The landlady discussed the matter further with Jenkins and Hughes and also with her son, Bernard, whose room was across the hall. They finally convinced her to call the police.  

It was now 3:45 a.m.; they had taken Frank Little slightly before 3:00. Mrs. Byrne talked to the desk sargeant, inquiring, "Whether or not you are going to bring back that man you arrested?" The officer knew of no arrest and suggested to her that it had "probably been a county affair."  

To check on her story, however, three officers—Jerry Lynch, J. L. Casey, and Jim Larkin—went to the Steele Block where Mrs. Byrne related to them the events, as best she could. The patrolmen then notified Lieutenant Mike Dwyer and an investigation began.  

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15 Anacconda Standard, August 4, 1917.  
16 Ibid.  
17 Ibid.  
18 Ibid.  
19 Ibid.  
20 Butte Miner, August 2, 1917.  
21 Ibid.
After leaving the boarding house, the Cadillac had proceeded with less caution. P. H. McCarthy and W. F. Ingrahan, proprietors of the O'Brien Saloon, spotted the car speeding north on Wyoming Street.  

After traveling a short distance, the car stopped; Frank was tied to the rear bumper and then dragged for a block, his kneecaps were scraped off. With Frank back in the car, it then turned and headed south. A few blocks past the city limits, the car turned right, onto the county road, drove three hundred feet, and stopped. Looming ahead was the trestle where the Milwaukee Railroad passed over the Northern Pacific.  

Inside the automobile the men attempted to place a noose around his neck. Desperately, Frank began to struggle. Even with a cast on his leg, he was able to keep the noose from being slipped over his head. They had to pull him from the car. One man hit him in the back of the head with the butt of his pistol.  

The noose now securely around his neck, the men dragged Frank beneath the trestle. The vigilante note was pinned on his underwear while a twenty-five foot length of rope was thrown over the trestle. In the glaring light from the car's headlamps, Frank was raised until his feet dangled five feet above the tracks below.  

The men made a hasty effort to erase their footprints. Then they re-entered their car. Returning to the county road, they proceeded to

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22 Butte Miner, August 2, 1917.
24 Missoulian, August 2, 1917.
Arizona Street and drove northwest to the highway which led to Ana-
conda. 26

Frank Little hung unconscious from the trestle. A trickle of
blood ran down his shoulder. He slowly strangled to death. 27

A few blocks away, the howls of several dogs, faded and merged
into the pre-dawn stillness. 28

26 Anaconda Standard, August 4, 1917.
27 Anaconda Standard, August 2, 1917.
28 Butte Miner, August 7, 1917.
THE FUNERAL

"Bury Frank where the organization thinks best."

Bessie Courtwright, sister,
to IWW Headquarters

"Telegram Frank's funeral arrangements. Save a few of
Joe Hill's ashes for me."

Emma B. Little, sister,
to IWW Headquarters

"Bury Little on the fighting ground."

William Haywood, IWW Leader,
to MWWU

"Will bury Little Sunday evening. All miners to turn
out. Will be largest funeral ever seen in Butte."

Peter Petaja, miner,
to IWW Headquarters

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1Solidarity, August 11, 1917.

2Ibid. Among Little's few personal belongings was an envelope
of Joe Hill's ashes, also an IWW martyr.

3Missoulian, August 2, 1917.

4Solidarity, August 11, 1917.
The mood in Butte during the days following Frank's murder was extremely tense. Wild rumors of more lynchings filled the air. Tom Campbell, MMU president, ordered the miners to obey all laws. On the morning of August 1, miners gathered sullenly in Finlander Hall. A special meeting of the Metal Mine Workers' Union was held. A flag was raised on the pole atop the Hall and lowered to half-mast. A note appeared on the door:

Frank Little was taken from his bed early this morning by gunmen and murdered. He was not given a chance to put on his clothes or to get his crutches.  

On Sunday, August 5, Frank was buried. Ten thousand people crammed the streets of Butte to watch the procession. The windows of every building filled with faces. The entire police force was on duty, with scores of special deputy sheriffs and four hundred Montana Guardsmen. An officer had been stationed at every intersection.

The procession formed on Main Street with the head just north of the intersection with Broadway. At 2:00 p.m. the phalanx began. Three thousand, four hundred, ninety-one people marched the four miles to the Mountain View Cemetery for Frank.  

It took over thirty minutes for the entire cortege to pass through one intersection. The only sound to be heard was that of feet thudding

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6 The following account of Little's funeral is based on the story which appeared in the Anaconda Standard, August 6, 1917.
against the granite-paved streets. Thirty-five hundred workers and ten thousand spectators were totally silent.

At the head of the procession an American flag was carried. To the right of it walked Tom Campbell, to the left, William F. Danne, of the electrical workers. Following them was a band of members in the musician's union.

The Pearce-Connolly Club, an organization of Irishmen for the liberation of Ireland, was next. Each of the 120 members of the club wore a large green sash decorated with rosettes of green and yellow. Those men who were also members of the miners' union had white buttons pinned on their sashes.

Following the Irishmen were two hundred women, mostly Finnish. Many carried babies and some had small children in carts. Behind the women were members of the various committees of the Metal Mine Workers' Union.

Carrying their union banner, the electricians were next and following them were members of several different unions. Among those organizations represented were the street railway men, hod carriers' and working-men's union, cement workers, and several building trades unions.

Twenty-five hundred members of the Metal Mine Workers' Union came next. The marshalls of this section wore wide sashes of red silk.

There were some more women and then a black hearse. At each side walked three honorary pallbearers, also wearing bright red sashes.

The unnatural silence deepened when Frank Little's casket appeared. Covered with red carnations, the gray coffin was born on the shoulders of 6 miners, all over 6 feet tall. Twenty men working in relays carried Frank's body to the cemetery; each wore a red sash.
Directly behind the casket, forming the guard of mourners, marched one hundred Industrial Workers of the World. Walking in double file, the Wobblies represented several nationalities; some were prominent in the organization and had come to Butte for Frank's funeral. All wore sashes of red.

At the end of the procession were twelve automobiles carrying friends and a delegation of miners.

The procession moved down Main Street to Park, east to Arizona and down to Utah and Front where it turned on Harrison and went directly to the cemetery. The bulk of the marchers dispersed at Cobban Street. The IWU then took the lead, for the rest of the distance, followed by the Pearce-Connally Club.

There were four hundred people at the cemetery for the ceremony. Two groups of the IWU, one line within another, formed around the grave-site. A banner of red silk reading "THE ONE BIG UNION, UNIVERSAL, THE IWU" was held along with many smaller ones saying "A MARTYR FOR SOLIDARITY." Red carnations were distributed.

After the casket was lowered, the mourners dropped red silk handkerchiefs into the grave. Tom Rimmer, a IWU member, delivered the eulogy:

Friends and fellow working men. We are gathered here today for a sad and sacred duty. We are to pay the last marks of respect to a man, who gave up his life for a principle—solidarity of the working class. The degenerates who took him from bed in the middle of the night and murdered him in a more vile fashion than they would a dog, did not destroy his spirit. They found that he met death the same way he had fought for you and me. Where he goes now we do not know, but that he lived to see a principal no one can deny. He was devoted to a class struggle and liberty.
His deeds and words were good deeds and words, and his memory lives with us and will lead us.

We now consign him to a world we know nothing of. 7

The red carnations were tossed into the grave as Rimmer finished speaking.

Unsure of what to do next, the mourners stood at the grave in silence.

A man said, "Let's sing a revolutionary song to finish the ceremony."

"Let it be the 'Marseille,'" said another. A snatch of the tune was haltingly sung, but soon died away.

A shovel of dirt was slipped into the grave and the mourners quietly dispersed.

7Anaconda Standard, August 6, 1917.
ANALYSIS

Bring Out the Whitewash
(To the tune of Count Your Blessings)
by Emma B. Little

Don't read the Declaration, boys, it's un-American,
That's what the cops will tell you in little old Spokane,
Instead of the Constitution, Post Mortems now you'll get,\
The capitalists are killing off the working men, you bet.

Chorus

Bring out the whitewash,
Bring out the whitewash,
Spread it on as thick as you can;
Bring out the whitewash,
Bring out the whitewash,
We've murdered another working man.

Down in Bisbee you ought to see the fun,
When we rounded up the working men and made the Bisbee run.
And while we were about it, we took in all their cash,
We knew they wouldn't need it, in the desert there's no hash.

Chorus

Frank Little was an agitator, he made the people think,
We thought we'd better get him or else he'd raise a stink,
And so we planned the murder well, the cops were nowhere near,
They everyone had gone to get another glass of beer.

Chorus

We've got another bunch picked out and we'll get them too,
We've planned the murders carefully and just how we will do,
There'll be no interference, for the cops will all be wise.
We're killing off the working men because they organize.

Chorus

\(^{1}\)Solidarity, August 11, 1917. During the infamous Cripple Creek Strike, 1903-1904, the Governor of Colorado said, "To hell with the Constitution, we'll give them post-mortems."
Rewards were offered, condemnations were made, investigations were initiated, and newspapers predicted a reign of terror following the lynching of Frank Little. The events of the month following the murder were confused, and the mood in Butte, and, indeed, throughout the nation, bordered on hysteria. Emerging from these events, however, was a movement that successfully suppressed the Industrial Workers of the World, and drastically infringed the right of free speech in America.

Authorities never apprehended the six men who lynched Little; an inquest by a coroner's jury ended without results. The investigation conducted by Butte authorities lacked conviction, and it too failed to produce any suspects. Sam Ford, then Montana's attorney general, came to Butte to hold his own investigation. County authorities reluctantly gave him a room in the courthouse to use and brought to him the witnesses he wished to question. Ford was also unsuccessful. The people of Butte were so frightened that identification of the murderers was made impossible.2

But whereas facts concerning the lynching were limited, speculation was widespread. The murder had been conducted carefully, efficiently, and brutally. On the bottom of the vigilante note were seven initials; each initial corresponded to the name of an important leader of the strike

(L. D. C. S. W. T.—Little, circled to indicate he was already lynched, William F. Dunne, leader of the electricians' union, Tom Campbell, president of the MEAWJ, W. G. Sullivan, attorney for the miners' union, Dan Shovlin, another union official, John Williams, a Wobbly and a friend of Little's, John Timoch, another Wobbly). The miners' Strike Bulletin quickly affixed the blame. "Every Man, Woman, and Child In This County knows that Company Agents perpetrated this Foulest of All Crimes." The Strike Bulletin also claimed to know the names of the lynchers—three copies of the list were made and hidden in three different locations. When the coroner's jury requested William G. Sullivan to reveal his information, he was unable to (whether this was because he did not actually have the information, he lacked proof for his accusations, or he feared retaliation by the Company, he did not say).  

The press in Butte had polarized along two lines—the Butte Daily Post and the Butte Miner supporting ACM's position, and the Strike Bulletin, supporting the miners. As a result, very few individuals remained neutral and unbiased. One of those people, however, was Burton K. Wheeler, who, because he refused to arrest Little, had become deeply involved in the controversy. Wheeler conducted a small investigation of his own; he still maintains that "... in my judgment they [the lynchers] were paid to do so by the Anaconda crowd."  

In Montana: High, Wide, and Handsome, Joseph Kinsey Howard referred the stories that one might hear in Butte, concerning the lynching.

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3Strike Bulletin, August 2, 1917.
4Butte Daily Post, August 7, 1917.
According to the rumors, of the six lynchers, two were in business, two were gunmen, and one was connected with law enforcement. The stories of these men contain some irony in that they all were supposed to have died unnatural deaths. These rumors can still be heard.  

In any case, the Anaconda Copper Mining Company had the most to gain by the murder of Little, and the logic behind such action is easily deduced. The Company owned newspapers across the state—in Butte, Anaconda, Missoula, Helena, and Billings. The newspapers all attacked the strike and, especially, Frank Little with charges of treason, sedition, sabotage, and acts of violence. In reporting the speech Little made at the ball park on July 19, 1917, the Butte Daily Post seemed to make no distinction between fact and opinion.

IN TREASONABLE TIRADE
LITTLE SAYS CONSTITUTION IS A MERE SCRAP OF PAPER

These are two of the seditious utterings made by Frank Little. Little . . . made a treasonable speech at the ball park eight days ago . . .

The Company press not only slurred Little, but also inflated his simplest statements to a proportion capable of instilling fear and hatred into the readers.

In writing to the Attorney General, Burton K. Wheeler expressed his view of the press coverage.

My impression from a general survey of the labor situation as it exists throughout this state is that the press of Montana is acting at the

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7 Toole, Twentieth Century Montana, p. 277.

8 Butte Daily Post, July 20, 1917.
request of the employers to create an impression
in the minds of the people that the IWW element is
creating a lawless situation . . .

The belief of the MMWU, as expressed in Solidarity, was even more specific.

The papers endeavored to exaggerate every
utterance of this man to the proportions of treason;
yet, most of the things he said are, and for many
months have been, heard wherever men congregate and
discuss current events. 10

So, in the minds of the Montana public, Frank Little became a
traitor and a threat to national security. In addition to this, the AC
genuinely feared Little. Before he came to Butte, Company officials felt
that violence was likely to occur. After his arrival, they felt it was
unavoidable. 11 The basis for this fear came from reports filed by the
Company's detectives in the MMWU and IWW.

Testifying before the Montana Council of Defense, William F.
Dunne spoke on the validity of detective reports.

Now, if there is anything more unreliable than
a force of detectives, in the employ of a corporation,
I don't know what it is. The detectives feel they
must have something to report, if they are going to
hold their jobs, and consequently they cook up all
sorts of odd mis-information . . . 12

The two collections of detective reports submitted to the Council as evi-
dence in the Oscar Rohn case support this observation. Oscar Rohn, general

9 U.S., Department of Justice, Wheeler to Attorney General, August 21,
1917, Glasser File.

10 Solidarity, August 18, 1917.


12 Testimony of hearings held by the Montana Council of Defense, in
connection with the arrest of Von Waldru, alias Charles Stone, by federal
authorities, and also in connection with an investigation of charges against
Oscar Rohn, typewritten manuscript in Box No. 7 of boxed collection of
Montana Council of Defense Papers, Montana Historical Library, Helena,
Montana, p. 1353.
manager of the North Butte Mining Company, a non-Company property, hired a German named Carl Pohl to investigate the new miners' union. Pohl hired two men, Carl Dilling and Warren Bennetts, to attend NMWU and IMW meetings and file daily reports with him. The two detectives operated unknown to each other. Their reports are similar, but where Dilling made succinct notes of what was said at a meeting, Bennetts quoted at great lengths, underlined particularly inflammatory passages. Bennetts' reports were basically flamboyant exaggerations of the reports submitted by Carl Dilling.\(^\text{13}\)

If Company officials believed the reports filed by their detectives, it is not surprising that they feared Frank Little. In Bennetts' report, Little was reported to have preached violence and revolution. In addition to this, wartime demands had increased the price of copper, but as long as the miners were on strike, ACM could not take advantage of the increase. At the end of July the strike was two months old, and no solution was expected. The Company had already made efforts to break the strike with offers of wage increases and intimidation, and was unsuccessful. The Company knew that if the miners could be provoked to violence, the strike easily could be crushed—a company of Montana Guardsmen was stationed on the outskirts of Butte. It seemed to the officials that violence would be very likely if one of the miners' leaders was murdered.

Due to the reports of the detectives, the Company feared Little, and because of the attack by the newspapers, the public also feared Little.

\(^{13}\)Detective reports at hearings held by the Montana Council of Defense, Box No. 7 of boxed collection of Montana Council of Defense Papers, Montana Historical Library, Helena, Montana.
He was a logical victim. So, Frank Little was lynched, in the hope that subsequent disorders by the strikers would justify the crushing of the strike.

The Company press lauded the murder—the only regret was that the hanging should have occurred after a trial. The newspapers also predicted that a reign of violence would follow the lynching, but, as Abraham Glasser stated in his report to the Justice Department, "... Indeed, the strikers themselves knew full well that the murder might have been as much provocative as anything else."\(^{14}\) According to Glasser, the only violence caused was that by "... certain elements opposed to the strike when efforts to break it up by other means seemed futile."\(^{15}\) The predicted violence never occurred.

But, if the lynching's immediate purpose had failed, its long-range results were certainly welcomed by the ACM—for the state-wide and nationwide reaction to the lynching of Frank Little paved the way for governmental suppression of the INW.\(^{16}\)

After visiting Butte shortly after the murder on August 1, Montana's governor, Samuel V. Stewart went to Portland. There a meeting of the Western Governors was held to discuss tactics for the suppression of the INW. The governors elected Stewart to take a message concerning the "threatening" situation in Montana to Washington, D.C. and present it to

\(^{14}\)U.S., Department of Justice,"The Butte Miners' Strikes 1917-1920," by Glasser, Glasser File, p. 47.

\(^{15}\)Ibid., p. 39.

President Woodrow Wilson. By the 27th of August, Stewart was in Washington attending a conference on methods of curbing the IWW.\textsuperscript{17}

On September 5, a nationwide raid on the IWW was conducted in thirty-three cities. Books, correspondence, typewriters, and even spitoons were taken for evidence. Many of the raids were conducted without warrants. At the same time, 166 Wobblies were indicted on charges of conspiracy. In April of 1918 a trial of 113 of those indicted began in Chicago. As a result of that trial, 93 of the IWW's leaders were convicted and jailed, all at the same time. The IWW never recovered from the loss of its leaders.\textsuperscript{18}

The suppression of the IWW did not stop with the arrest of its leaders. Legislative action that eventually outlawed the IWW began on February 14, 1918, when a special session of the Montana legislature convened on Governor Stewart's order. In a speech to the Society of Equity, a farmers' organization, Stewart admitted the purpose of the session was to suppress the IWW. The session had been called at the demand of hundreds of letters to the Governor and the editorials of the Company press.\textsuperscript{19}

On February 22, the Criminal Syndicalism Act, outlawing the IWW, went into effect on Governor Stewart's signing.\textsuperscript{20}

The Montana Sedition Law, signed on the next day, dated back to a law Montana Senator Henry L. Meyers introduced to the Senate on August 15, 1917. When Senator Meyers initiated the proposal, which was obviously directed against the IWW, he admitted it was a result of the Little lynching.

\textsuperscript{17} Evans, "Montana's Role," pp. 68-71.

\textsuperscript{18} George, The I.W.W. Trial, pp. 10-13.

\textsuperscript{19} Evans, "Montana's Role," p. 80.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., p. 91.
His reasoning was that if Little could have been tried for his allegedly treasonable utterings, then the lynching would not have occurred. The bill, however, was buried in a committee. The Meyers bill, with only a few alterations, was the bill passed by the extraordinary session of the Montana legislature.  

In Congress the anti-IWW legislation drive was spearheaded by Montana Senators Meyers and Walsh. The Sedition Law of 1918 signed by President Wilson on May 16 of that year was nearly identical to Montana's law. The bill severely violated the right of free speech. An embarrassed Congress repealed the law in 1921.

Nevertheless, the national sedition law, along with the state laws against syndicalism, was all that was necessary for the prosecution of the Wobblies, suspected Wobblies, and indeed, anyone who made utterances against the government or its policies. All these acts were directly traceable to the lynching of Frank Little on August 1, 1917.

If Frank Little could have witnessed those events incited by his lynching, he might have laughed in dismay at the whole American capitalistic system. For the United States it was a period of emotionalism; a time of hypocrisy, contradictions, and near hysteria.

Frank Little lived in an era of amazing opposites—between wealth and poverty, ideology and action, radicalism and reactionism. When World War I mobilized patriotic fervor against foreign enemies, internal and external, real as well as imaginary, hysteria became so wide spread that the public tolerated, if not condoned, extra-legal and unconstitutional

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22 Ibid., p. 97.
suppression of groups dissenting with the government. The people did not question the motives behind this action—rationality was abandoned.

No doubt many individuals sincerely feared such organizations as the IWW, and saw their existence as a threat to democracy; as many individuals, however, saw such organizations as a threat to their corporation and its profits, as in Frank Little's case.

The Federal Sedition Act of 1918 was the apex of a nationwide campaign against the IWW (it was not, however, a culmination of the hysteria, which continued into the early 1920s with the "red hunts"). The Anaconda Standard was in all seriousness when it commented on the newly passed law. The paper's view was typical of the nationwide mood.

There is no longer freedom of speech for the disloyal or the pro-Germans. A man can talk all he pleases if he talks right. The loyal people of this country have and will have all the freedom of speech and freedom of press they want. For the disloyal, free expressions are over.  

Although the Industrial Workers of the World initially failed, degenerating in the 1920s, it did establish a precedent for the principal of industrial unionism and the techniques of passive resistance. In the 1930s, the International Congress of Organizations (CIO) adopted many of the methods espoused by Frank Little and his union (most notably, the sit-down strike). The CIO also was based on the idea of industrial unionism. The difference between the two organizations, however, was that the CIO did not advocate the downfall of capitalism.

As a result, the CIO was successful, and, in a sense, the workers' society that Frank Little fought for has been established. The down-trodden

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laborer and ignorant immigrant that the IWW attempted to uplift has become a member of the most affluent middle-class society in the world.
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APPENDIX I

Map of Butte
APPENDIX II

Diagram of the Boardinghouse