
Speech on Behalf of the IWW: Boston — February 3, 1918

by John J. Ballam

Transcript in DoJ/BoI Investigative Files, Report of W.J. West, NARA collection M-1085, reel 916.

Mr. Chairman and Fellow-workers:

After I get through speaking I have something to say about another subject than the one we are speaking about today that will be of infinitely more importance than the subject under discussion, to get at the root of the matter we are trying to get at. I won't need everybody but all those interested sincerely, vitally interested to the point where they too will be willing to go to jail when the call comes for them to go. I want those men and women to stay when I finish speaking. I know you are tired and the hall is cold and this has been a long, drawn-out meeting, but if you have that spirit and if you are willing to help out I have a proposition I want to put to you. So I want those of you who can stand a little cold and discomfort to stay a while longer than most and then hear what I have to say to them.

Fellow-workers:

Down on Commonwealth Avenue, placed there by some irony of history, there is a statue of a man by the name of William Lloyd Garrison. He published a little newspaper on Cornhill, in Boston, and was an advocate of the abolition of chattel slavery in the United States. He was the victim of broadcloth mob violence. They took that man, William Lloyd Garrison, tied him to the tail of a cart, dragged him through the streets of Boston, and were about to lynch him. Now today, and opposite the Hotel Vendome, the statue of this man stands, amid the houses and palatial dwellings of the descendants of the very men that would have lynched him 40 or 50 years ago. The men who today are giving up their liberties and their lives for the abolition of wage-slavery, their monuments and their statues will be placed for the worship of generations

to come, not amid the palatial dwellings of the idle rich but amidst the wholesome comfortable houses of the working people of the United States when all shall have become working men and women.

In Comrade [Marion] Sproule's talk she gave you a vivid picture with a criticism and an analysis of the conditions under which we work and live; you and I who earn what pittance we get by our actual physical labor know these conditions because we live in, under, and around them. There is an organization in the United States today, formed in 1905, the fruit and fruition of the experience of men and women who came to study and understand these conditions and who seek to make of this organization a battering ram that shall shake from the foundations of society the entire superficial structure, its political and juridical forms, and sweep them away like deadwood of the past as we abolished kings and their courts for potent purposes, and raise upon the foundations of society the structure of industrial democracy. That organization is the Industrial Workers of the World and it is the only organization in the United States today, bar none, that has the program and the principle and the stamina back of it to make capitalist America a part of the cooperative democracy of the world. (*Applause.*)

I saw the IWW now is the only organization that has the program out of and upon which can be built the future society of the working class. I hold in my hand their preamble — the preamble of the IWW. The government of the United States, which is, and can only be, a committee of its ruling class, regardless of the fact that it may be interspersed in its various legislatures and congresses with men of radical thought, who call themselves Socialists, and when they get elected betray the best interests of the working class, (*applause*) which

can only be, as it always was, the political junkshop of capitalism. (*Applause.*) The various legislatures, such as the one on Beacon Hill, such as the one in Albany, and such as the one in Washington, are the places where the different factional elements of the capitalist class and the middle class, from the shoestring peddler to the owner of railroads, where they meet to discuss and adjudicate their differences between themselves without recourse to the broadsword and the battle axe. In international politics they have not got over that yet but they are trying to patch that up too and to make an international congress where they can chew the rag at the expense of the working class.

The thing for which Haywood, St. John, Miller, and the rest of the boys are in jail is industrial unionism. We have more than 1500 of our boys in jail. The IWW is comparatively small but it holds within its grasp the means of the destruction of the capitalist system, for it is the only organization that would lay the axe at the root and chop the whole damned fabric down. (*Applause.*) It is the only organization that will not and does not compromise those principles of opportunism and reform. It is the only organization in the United States of the working class that draws the class line, that abjures territorial difference, and would have the working class organized around and upon the job in the industries where they work so they may build up within the shell of the old, rotten society of capitalism the new society of the working class, that when it shall have grown to its proper proportions shall burst its integument, burst its skin, and come out fully blossomed upon the stem of time, the fruition and product of the working class, those who alone are capable of judging what they want and how they want to get it. (*Applause.*)

This problem contains the whole story — and the government of the United States, the mouthpiece of the capitalist class, has made it a crime to print or to distribute this preamble I read to you now. Haywood says this preamble is nailed to the masthead and it will never come down until all the things it demands are realized.

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

Nothing in common! Not a thought, not a wish,

not a hope, not a fear; absolutely, my Socialist friends, nothing in common — not even the legislatures, not even their jobs in the post office; not government ownership, not a municipal railroad, not a municipal incinerating plant, not a beautiful playground, not a hill, mountain, field, fountain, farm, or stream, mill, mine, or factory — nothing in common. No army or navy, no wars of defense or offense, nor soldiers — nor Red Cross funds, nor war budgets — nothing in common. (*Applause.*)

They go on to say:

There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.

Do you get that? “There can be no peace!” I am not a pacifist. I do not deplore this war. I don’t care one snap of my finger for the millions of lives that have been lost; I am not a sentimentalist. The working class can give its life and blood if it chooses to, to protect the master class in its ownership of the things with which they crush out the labor and the life of the working class in factory, mill, and mine, but I have no sympathy for them, absolutely none. (*Applause.*) They go to fight, they go to kill, they go to shed the blood of another workingman in a different colored uniform, and when they die they get their just reward on earth! I have no sympathy whatever for the slave working man who sheds his blood for the master class — I don’t deplore this war! I am not a pacifist, nor is the IWW, for they say “there can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found amongst millions of people, the working people, and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.” So we don’t stand for terms of democracy and peace. The IWW has declared war upon the capitalist class! (*Applause.*) And they are bitter enemies. War to the knife, war to the hilt, war to the last owner of private property until he shall have gone into the factory, donned overalls with us, to earn his daily bread.

They say further:

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the Workers of the World organize as a class and take possession of the earth and the means of production and abolish the wage system.

Do you get that, my Socialist friends? The IWW says we must come together and take — not use — but take, by the right of might, every mill, every mine, every field, every farm, every railroad, every steamship line, and every manner of means of wealth and production. Take it! By the right of might! Not for sentimental reasons, not because working people suffer, but because the working class shall so have organized as to have acquired the might to have the right to take the things they create themselves. (*Applause.*) For nothing in the world counts but power, nothing in this counts but force! He who has the great organized force and power will prevail, though all the gods in Heaven and the devils in Hell are against him. They never fail, for God and the Devil are always on the side of the army that has the biggest guns!

The preamble goes on to say:

We find that the centuries of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands make the trades unions unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the exploiting class, because the trades unions foster a state of things which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. The trades unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers. These sad conditions can be changed and the interests of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or in all industries, if necessary, share work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making “an injury to one an injury to all.”

Instead of the conservative motto, “A fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work,” we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary touchword, “Abolition of the wage system.” It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized not only for the everyday struggle with the capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

That is the preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World, that preamble that Haywood says is nailed to the masthead. That preamble shall not come down until all of its provisions have been completely complied with. It is the charter of the liberties of the Industrial Workers of the World. (*Applause.*)

I believe in that organization. More than that, the men and women of the IWW believe in it and believe in themselves. They are of a type of rebellious slaves that cannot be suppressed. They look at the

martyred body of Frank Little with hardly a murmur, stiff-lipped, march on and say, “We remember.” They never cry or quail or quake. They are men and women of the finest moral fibre that the world has ever seen. They are writing the history of the class struggle in blood red letters, in letters red with their own blood. They are the advance-guard, and martyrs of the greatest cause that the world has ever seen, but they will win — they cannot lose. The capitalist class can but add fuel to the flames, and from 25,000 members in 1914, the IWW has 500,000 members today. (*Applause.*) They have raided their halls, broken into their convention and taken their convention bodily to jail, and the fellow-workers in jail carried out the deliberations they were prevented from doing in the privately-owned hall. They advertised in the newspaper, *The Industrial Worker*, and the bulletin book their dates freely: “Raids upon IWW headquarters are becoming popular and we cannot supply all comers.” They welcome violence on the part of the master class, for there is but one organization that really and fully understands the philosophy of violence, and that is the IWW, and that is why they are opposed to violence and they never use it themselves.

Now, what about that feature of the IWW? Oh, I have heard members of radical organizations say, “They are good men; they are great men, but they are misinformed; they go too fast, they go too far; they don’t take into account the psychology of the working people; they believe in violence, in sabotage, in crimes against property” — crimes against property! Property is the only crime. Property itself is the colossal crime against the human-being, against the world. (*Applause.*) We want to abolish property!

Proudhon gave the best definition of property years ago in true words. He said, “Property is theft.” You cannot acquire property unless you steal it. Sabotage, which is a crime against property, is frowned upon by the most intellectual, the best men and women of the radical movement. The IWW does not believe in violence and we who speak for the IWW challenge [our opponents to produce] a single court case, as single record against any men or women in the IWW accusing him of violence. Violence has always been used against them. Who believes in violence? Violence is the *non plus ultra*, the last word in capitalism. Without violence the capitalist system would fall of its own weight.

The capitalist system is based on violence, is based upon coercion, is based upon property as against life. There is no building of any size, there is not a subway which has been put through, there is not a railway line which has been built, but what it is cemented with the blood of the workers, the actual physical blood of the workers cemented in stones and built into the structure. There is no coat you wear, or shoes on your feet, that don't contain within their threads and fiber the bones and blood and life of men and women and children who made them for you to wear. Violence is the bread and meat of the capitalist system and every spokesman of capitalism is an outspoken advocate of violence — violence against the person and violence against property.

Here is an article which appeared in the papers, in the press. It is sent out by the Associated Press, by wire, dated Houston, Texas, October 1st, 1917:

Judge Walter G. Barnes, of the United States District Court, is charging a Federal Grand Jury at the beginning of the October term today, after calling by name Senators Stone, of Missouri; Hardwick, of Georgia; Vardemann, of Mississippi; Gronna, of North Dakota; Gore, of Oklahoma; and LaFollette, of Wisconsin, said —

Now remember, the man who said this is a United States District Court Judge and is supposed to have a judicial temperament and judicial mind, and to be fair and impartial according to his oath in administering the law. He is charging a jury, he is charging a jury:

"If I had a wish I would wish that you men had jurisdiction to return bills of indictment against these men —"

Stone, Vardemann, and so forth.

"They ought to be tried promptly and fairly and I believe this court could administer the law fairly but I have a conviction as strong as life that this country would stand them up against an adobe wall tomorrow and give them what they deserve, for any man deserves death that is a traitor. I wish I could pay for the ammunition and I would like to attend the execution. If I could be in the firing squad I would not want to be the marksman who had the blank shell."

That is a judge advocating murder against men with whom he partially disagrees. He would have Senator Stone shot, and Vardemann — fellow capitalists of his. What would he do to Haywood, St. John, Giovannitti, and the rest of them?

The crew, the piratical, buccaneering crew that are in charge of the industries of the United States, those most bloodthirsty, most unconscionable scoundrels that ever went unhung and unwhipped in any state in any part of the world (*applause*) — they are advocates of violence, all of them! Only this judge comes out with it in a bit of temper and says what others believe.

When Comrade [Morris] Hillquit was running for Mayor in New York City, the man with the big teeth, the man of the stuffed club, the man with the bulldog jaw, the man with the gorilla head, big-teeth "Terrible Teddy" [Roosevelt], the man whose very personality breathes force and all that is repugnant and brutal in life, the man who reminds one of a caveman (*applause*), whose intellect is on a par with that of the caveman, the man who was a colonel of the "Spanko War" in 1898, in his own autobiography, written by his own hand, over his own name, made this statement:

I had a gun with me, a gun given to me by a good, friendly captain of a United States war vessel, and was in a tight place and I pulled that gun —

I think he is a damned liar. That is his favorite expression to everybody [who he sees as dangerous.] I only use that as him.

I pulled that gun. Bye and bye I saw one figure clothed in white, a Spanish soldier, and I shot at him and I missed.

I believe him.

I saw another one and I shot and missed him, and a third ran for cover and I pulled my gun and I got him in the back.

This colonel of vigilantes though vigilantes should be organized in New York and that men who expressed any opinion contrary to his own and those who were in power at Washington should be promptly lynched. There is a fellow-member of capitalism, the mighty man who would take the place of the gentleman now occupying the chair now in Washington, about whom we cannot express our real conviction, but of whom we might say that Nikolai Lenin said — if there are any secret service agents in the hall, you arrest Nikolai Lenin for saying this — he said: "A most colossal hypocrite (*applause*) — Mr. President Wilson."

About him I have no opinion, because I live in a democracy (*laughter*), where the only man who is safe is the man who has no opinions and he keeps that to himself. Elihu Root, who said these men ought to be shot at sunrise — editors of newspapers who were criticizing the policies of the government of the United States — they should be shot at sunrise; and the Rev. Van Dyke (?), this fine reverend gentleman, he who follows and preaches the word of the Lowly Nazarene, the Prince of Peace, who himself was hanged upon or crucified on a cross because he consorted with the multitude and spoke seditious words to them, this reverend gentleman would have the standard bearer in the Socialist campaign thrown into the East River. He does not believe in hanging.

Now, what does our friend, the President, say himself about the situation in the United States?

“Don’t you know that this country from one end to the other believes that something is wrong?”

This is not an irresponsible agitator talking. This is the President of the United States — and if [Albert] Burleson ever heard him say it, Burleson would lose his job, or the President would lose his. Wilson says:

“Don’t you know that this country from one end to the other believes that something is wrong? What an opportunity it would be for some man without a conscience —

without a capitalist conscience

— “to spring up and say: ‘This is the way; follow me,’ and lead in paths of destruction. We are in a temper to reconstruct economic society as we were once in a temper to reconstruct political society.

Mr. Wilson said that in 1913. You are right, President Wilson — “We are in a temper to reconstruct economic society” — if it costs your reputation and your political future. (Applause.) And the men that you have in jail tonight are of the temper and of that caliber and will carry out your predictions, for they have no capitalist conscience, and they don’t care whether their agitation leads in paths of the destruction of the capitalist system.

Now, the IWW has been condemned from one end of the country to the other; they dare not tell the truth about it. Once in a while you get a man here or

there who is more or less fair, who understands. There is a professor of the University of Oregon who wrote in the *Atlantic Monthly* for November 1917. He said:

The IWW is not a scheming group dominated by an unconventional and destructive social philosophy. It is merely a commonplace attitude, not such a state of mind as Machiavelli and Robespierre possessed, but one stamped on the lowest, most miserable labor conditions and outlook which American Industrialism produces. To those who have seen at first hand the life of the Western casual laborer, any reflections on his gratitude or spiritual buoyancy seemed ironical humor.

You have been told of these depredations in Arizona — I will not go over them again — where men have been dragged from their homes, and, mind you, the press says only 11 of the 1380 men who were herded into cattle cars had cards in the IWW. Some of them bought Liberty Bonds, some of them subscribed to the Red Cross, some of them owned grocery stores, one was a lawyer. Now, I ask you this as one man talks to another — think it over: Suppose the working people in some community would organize 2,000 men and arm them and then would break into the homes of the best people in Boston, we will say on Beacon Hill and Commonwealth Avenue, and take them from their beds at the dead of night, the capitalists of Boston, and put them on cars and send them out of the city — doe you think the government of this country would remain idle?

When I went to school they taught us that we had equality in the United States, equality before the law, that before the law all men were equal. Suppose in New York City seven working men would mass and arm themselves and break into the Hotel Knickerbocker and there take Roosevelt from his bed at night (*laughter*) and put him into an automobile, drive him 8 miles out the city, tie a rope around his neck and throw him over the top of a railroad trestle and there to leave him hanging by the neck until he was dead, and pin a sign upon his flesh for others to take warning — if that were done to him or any other of his ilk, would the police powers of the state remain idle? Would they not turn over every nook and corner, from one end of the land to the other, to find the seven desperate criminals who had so little regard for human life as to take a man and hang him? Are we equal before the law with our equals? If such a thing occurred in New

York City to Roosevelt, instead of having happened in Butte, Montana, to one Little, what wouldn't the press of the country say? Ringing from one end of the country to the other, editorials would be written to search out the criminals, that anarchy exists in the United States. Let no stone be unturned until all of these desperados be brought before the bar of justice. I can just imagine. This is a democracy; never forget it, think about it all the time. This is what we mean by democracy and this is what we mean by America: the world safe for capitalism and democracy. That is why Haywood, Ettor, St. John, and all the rest are in jail, because they know not only what goes on but because they know how to remedy it.

The working class in the United States today have the right to strike. I am amused when I hear speakers talk of rights. You have no rights. There are no rights vouchsafed for you; there never were. The Constitution of the United States does not grant or guarantee you any rights, it never did — it was never intended to. (Applause.) The Constitution of the United States is a document written by middle class traders for the purpose of protecting private property. And it is nothing more than that. The Bill of Rights that was in the Constitution comes in the form of an amendment to it as an afterthought in order to put the thing across when they were almost losing it in the United States. That is history. It was adopted by a very small margin and there was narrowly averted a second revolution in the United States, which did not take place, but which will take place. (Applause.) So I am amused when I hear people talking of rights. The only rights you have are the rights you take. The only rights you hold are the rights you hold by your superior organized might. Justice and fraternity and equality are all beautiful words, absolutely meaningless, unless backed up by the strong right arm of organized labor. When you have that strong right arm, when you have the unskilled workers organized industrially, not all of them, those engaged in the basic industries, you have a weapon by which you can impress upon others your conception of what is justice and what is right. Men who ask for justice never get it; men who ask for and plead for rights never achieve them; only the men who can band together and by their might take their rights have got them and hold them. Let that burn into your brain. Take that home with you, and nothing else

home with him. No one can give you emancipation, and that is something you will not deserve unless you are courageous enough to take it and take it against the face of all odds. (Applause.) You cannot send a man somewhere to take to another man to urge him to give you rights. Behind that man must be a force powerful enough to surmount all opposition — the secret of the Bolsheviki success. (Applause.)

Let us be fair with the capitalist class, as we want them to be fair with us. I don't believe in freedom of speech, I don't plead for it nor ask for it — I take it! (Applause.) When they let us speak it is not because there is a Constitution guaranteeing to give it to us, when we talk and get away with it. It is because they are afraid to stop us. (Applause.)

Now get me, because this is subtle: I do not believe in freedom of speech for the capitalist class. I do not blame them for not giving the industrial workers freedom of speech. I do not blame them for locking up every industrial worker they can lay their hands on. I do not blame them for doing it, for if the working class government gets control in the United States these men would come out as the other ones came out in Russia to undermine —

VOICE: Why do you preach it?

— the socialist republic and would clap them in jail and suppress them as being the enemies of society. I notice there is a man somewhere in the hall who does not understand. He does not get it. He is full of democracy. (Applause.) Understand me again: I don't believe in democracy — not do you. I don't believe that every man and woman should have a vote. I believe that every worker should have a vote, and none other. (Applause.) I don't recognize a society founded upon the unity of citizenship in a territory, in a city, in a state, where a man has a right to vote because he lives there. I recognize only the right of a man to vote because he works in a factory, mill, mine, or field or railroad or farm or in a newspaper plant doing useful labor. No one else in my estimation has the right to live except those who live by labor, their own labor. (Applause.) Therefore, I don't believe in democracy. I don't believe in democracy that vouchsafes the interests of an idler and a parasite — he has no right to live, he should be shot — any more than I believe in bedbugs.

Now, philosophically speaking, a bedbug has a right to live. (*Laughter.*) That is, if you believe in some Divine Creator, some Beneficent Providence. God must have had — if you believe in that individual — some purpose in placing that bedbug here. The purpose which he accomplishes is to keep us who are acquainted with him, the bedbug — only the working class knows him, they don't mingle in polite society — the purpose of the bedbug must be or seems to be to keep us scratching. (*Applause.*) The bedbug is a parasite, lives upon and out of your body. There is no doubt of that. It works while you sleep. The capitalist is a parasite, lives upon and out of the unpaid labor of the working class. You work while he sleeps. And the purpose of the capitalist, or at least his effect, is to keep you, the wage-slave, scratching. Could you kill a bedbug if you saw one in your bed? Certainly you would, because you know when you pull down the coverlets and find it there that it is not conducive to a good night's rest — therefore you kill him. Would I give the capitalist a vote? No! He is an enemy to society, a parasite who lives luxuriously and soft-handed out of and upon the labor of other men and women who do useful work in society.

Am I a democrat? Not by any means. I am a social-revolutionist! (*Applause.*) Would I suppress him? You bet your life I would! Would I sweep him out of the way? Would I sweep him out of the way? You can bet your last bottom dollar we will — that I would, and that we will!

When Scott Nearing was speaking at Convention Hall someone asked him about free speech in Russia. There is free speech in Russia for the first time for the working class. (*Applause.*) There is a right to work for every man and woman and child in Russia today and not the right to live upon some other man's work. (*Applause.*) That is not democracy, my friends. That is cooperation, a bigger, better, more powerful word. Get rid of your cobwebs; don't retain a single word or trace of capitalist philosophy, get a clear and clean sweep from it. That is what makes you and I IWW men. I believe in force for freedom, and in the use of all the force that the working class can gather and muster to amass and use in any direction that will achieve the end which is the historic mission of the working class. That is what the IWW stands for. It does not stand for violence.

My friends, did you ever hear an engine purring that does not create power? It makes no noise. Force and power are silent, quite definite. Any engine that starts rattling and creaking is losing power and is not generating. The IWW is silent, quiet, precise. It goes on its way without making any too much noise. All the noise that is made is made on the other side. Do you get that? Power does not mean and force does not mean throwing a brick at someone's head. What drives a streetcar down the track? Power. Force, in the shape of electricity carried along the wire. What kind of force? Force that has been intelligently directed and controlled by the motorman, turned off and on at will. Power will bring the working class effectiveness. What kind of force and power? Intelligently organized and controlled economic power and force. (*Applause.*) How may it operate? By crippling, by stopping, in the first analysis, the wheels of production. How could you stop this war tomorrow? Tonight? Any time you get ready? Fold your arms, put your hands in your pockets — and when they are in your pockets you may be sure nobody else can get his hands in there — put your hands in your pockets! Go home tonight and forget to get up in the morning. Don't let the alarm clock disturb you. Let you all do it and the war breaks down tomorrow. You have your way. (*Applause.*) Is that violence? It is the opposite to violence. It is action through inertia, by reversing the method in the direction that your boss wants you to move.

There is another way and a better way than that: Stay in the factory, keep the wheels running, and kick the bosses out. (*Applause.*) If I could get enough people to do that, you understand, they would be organized for that purpose. How many people? Five million. Five million men and women organized in the basic industries in the United States and we will take possession of the United States, every last stick and stone in it. Five million men organized in the basic industries, the basic industries of agriculture, mining, transportation, metal trades, and we will take possession of the United States without asking anyone any more questions than Nikolai Lenin and Leon Trotsky and their associates asked them when they passed into power.

How did they maintain their power? With soldiers? No. When Alexander Kerensky marched against Petrograd the railroad union of Russia refused to carry troops. There was no battle; there was no

bloodshed. How does the Bolsheviki maintain itself in power? Because it has the unskilled workers, the peasantry, the agricultural workers, the transportation works, and the men in the unskilled industries solidly behind them and so long as those workingmen stand by the Bolsheviki government in Russia no power can overthrow them. That is what the IWW wants to do in the United States. (*Applause.*)

Now, I am through; that is all there is to it. It is a simple proposition which does not require any philosophy. You don't have to go to Harvard, you don't have even to read Marx. You have to know, first, that you have nothing in common with the capitalist class; secondly, you have to know that you must be industrially organized, on the job, and then when you have enough that way, go to it. Nothing can stop you. Now, I may say this: It is simple; all great movements, all great inventions, all great ideas are wonderful for their simplicity, always. When it comes up, people say: "Why didn't people think of this before?" when it comes to an invention. The IWW is the fruit and blossom of its time. It conforms to industrial society; it cannot be broken up; it cannot be smashed. It will smash those that stand in its way and everything that stands in its way will be smashed by the Industrial Workers of the World once they get going. (*Applause.*)

Now, my friends, I have this request to make of those of you who, whether they agree with me entirely or not, are willing to do something for this cause. We want to organize in Boston a Defense Committee. This meeting is too small. There are not enough people here. This message has to be out across, and you have to help to do it. I am going to ask the ushers — are there any ushers? — who will volunteer as ushers? — come on, two IWW men — come on, Niels — I am going to ask the ushers to go through this audience, and not ask for any more money now but something worth more to me and to Haywood and those men in jail. I want your name and address. I am going to send you a postal card and going to call a conference meeting and going to send out circulars and going to invite trade unions and all other organizations of workingmen, whether they agree with us in toto or not, to get together with us in Boston and to put Boston on the map and hold

a demonstration and raise money. Up to this time only \$20 has been sent to Chicago. It is an outrage and a disgrace for the working class of Boston not to have done more than that. Now, then, give us your names and addresses. Associate with me and other men who will associate with you and give us your cooperation. I want your life; I demand it, in the name of Freedom! (*Applause.*) What else have you got to live for? What else? Are you trying to save your head? Is it worth anything to you or anybody else? We and you, or demand you if you are a class-conscious worker, to serve with us on a committee that will arouse Boston and get money to send to these men. They are in jail for you, and we are out here for them. Don't forget that. If there is anybody who wishes to ask a question while [ushers are passing] through the audience, we will be pleased to entertain it.†

* * *

Voice: What would you [advise] a man joining the army?

Ballam: If a man [is drafted into] the army what shall he do? I never give a man advice [on that]. I never advise a man to do that which a man is [not willing] to do himself. If I was in the draft I would tell you <illeg.>. I can tell you this: Obey your own conscience; there is no higher law. Does that answer your question?

Voice: Advise us of the charges on which the 166 members of the IWW were indicted.

Ballam: They were indicted for violating the Espionage Law and the Food Act. They are charged with spreading false information regarding the United States government at war and with aiding and abetting the enemy. They are charged with obstructing war industries and obstructing the United States government in the prosecution of the war. That is the technical charge. What they are really guilty of is interfering with capitalism in the United States, not only during the war, because we have had many IWW arrested and jailed and killed in times of peace. It is nothing unusual to arrest an IWW man.

Voice: (*to speaker Sproule*) This speaker said we have free speech given from some God.

†- One page of the Justice Department transcript, containing two audience questions about particulars of the IWW case, is partially illegible due to defective microfilming. Those questions are deleted here. Bracketed content approximated from content.

[Marion] Sproule: Now, gentlemen, ladies, and fellow-workers, I have not any superstition about a Supreme Deity that sits on some fleecy cloud and directs the force of humanity and I use the word "God" as a figure of speech. I do not believe in a personal God. I believe in a Universal Intelligence and I am part of it. Here is the gentleman who asked the question. Heaven and Hell are made for serfs and slaves. The good ones went to Heaven and the bad ones went to Hell. Now that is my definition of the present organized religion today. It is simply an auxiliary to the capitalistic class to keep the working class in subjection and hold them in economic slavery, and I am ready to debate that question with any theologian in this country. Bear in mind, as I told you before, don't go out and say I am against religion, because it is a broad term and can be used in many ways. I believe in a Universal Intelligence and I am a part of that intelligence. Does that answer your question?

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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