

MAINSTREAM MEDIA, AFRICAN-AMERICAN PERIODICALS, LABOR PRESS
AND FIRST RED SCARE STRIKES: HOW A BIG BUSINESS AND
GOVERNMENT HELPED TO UNDERMINE LABOR.

by

ERICK JAMES POWELL

(Under the Direction of Dr. John H. Morrow, Jr.)

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines how and why the media, in the form of newspaper and journal editors, reacted to labor agitation during the First Red Scare. It examines mainstream, African-American, and labor media and focuses on the degree of similarity and difference in their response. After a study of papers and journals such as the *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *The Crisis*, *The Messenger*, and *The American Federationist*, this thesis argues that mainstream newspapers, owned by wealthy people who wanted to protect their property, represented big businesses. Working hand-in-hand with the national government, these periodicals opposed labor agitation and characterized such activity as radical and foreign. African-American and labor press struggled to find a consensus viewpoint in this frenetic period.

INDEX WORDS: First Red Scare, Mainstream Media, African-American Periodicals,
Labor Press, Big Business, Government

MAINSTREAM MEDIA, AFRICAN-AMERICAN PERIODICALS, LABOR PRESS,
AND FIRST RED SCARE STRIKES: HOW AND WHY A BIG BUSINESS AND
GOVERNMENT HELPED TO UNDERMINE LABOR.

by

ERICK JAMES POWELL

B.A., Hartwick College, 2001

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the University of Georgia in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2006

© 2006

Erick James Powell

All Rights Reserved

MAINSTREAM MEDIA, AFRICAN-AMERICAN PERIODICALS, LABOR PRESS,
AND FIRST RED SCARE STRIKES: HOW AND WHY A BIG BUSINESS AND
GOVERNMENT HELPED TO UNDERMINE LABOR.

by

ERICK JAMES POWELL

Major Professor: John Morrow

Committee: Kathleen Clark
Robert Pratt

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
December 2006

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	Page
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
2 HISTORIOGRAPHY.....	11
3 FIRST RED SCARE STRIKES: THE RESPONSE OF MAINSTREAM MEDIA.....	24
4 FIRST RED SCARE STRIKES: THE RESPONSE OF AFRICAN- AMERICAN MEDIA.....	51
5 FIRST RED SCARE STRIKES: THE RESPONSE OF LABOR PRESS.....	83
6 CONCLUSION.....	100
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	108

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis seeks to understand how and why mainstream opinion, in the form of newspaper editors, reacted to labor agitation during the Boston police, steel, and coal strikes during the First Red Scare of 1919. It also examines African-American and labor publications and their response to these events. It examines whether a consistent thread, substantial difference, or a mixture of the two existed between the mainstream media, African-American, and labor press responses. If a major variance in reaction did take place, what degree did government involvement play? It also studies whether media reception focused on issues of class, race, immigration, and the rise of domestic/foreign political ideologies/parties. In regard to race, for example, what degree did it play in media response, what themes did the press develop about race, and did various geographical locations deal with race in different ways? This thesis contends that media reply to labor agitation always included some element of class, race, immigration, and the rise of domestic/foreign political ideologies/parties. It also insists that mainstream Americans and the national government had a major influence on the reaction of African-American and labor periodicals to the fall 1919 strikes.

When I started on this project, I intended to determine the extent to which anti-foreigner sentiment played a role in public reaction to and discussion of the First Red Scare strikes. Finding it extremely difficult to find sources that could determine conclusively the public opinion for all the American people during this period, I decided to change the focus to

mainstream opinion. When talking about “mainstream,” I focus on people with vast financial, political, or social power. The editors who ran the papers and journals examined fit this definition of “mainstream” to one degree or another. In the pure sense of the word, mainstream can include any group or groups that are considered the “best in a particular society.”¹ This could include academic, athletic, political, and religious leaders. The editors who ran the mainstream newspapers came from the economic “best.” This thesis seeks whether a consistent pattern occurred in the behavior and reaction of the “economically powerful” to labor agitation. It then looks to examine to what degree African-American and labor newspapers and journals agreed with the mainstream media response. If a common view existed, did outsiders with monetary power, or the desire to protect a system that favored the accumulation of money, put pressure on African-American and labor press to respond in a favorable manner? Newspapers and journals provide a good source for understanding how mainstream Americans reacted to labor uprisings because during the fall 1919 strikes, many individuals with vast wealth controlled their operation.

When looking at mainstream newspapers, I wanted to get a vast geographical scope to address the questions of the project. Taking papers from around the country would best allow me to grasp how mainstream newspapers tried to influence their readers’ minds on labor uprisings. This would provide the ability to see if variations existed between mainstream newspapers and then to explain them. I chose the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times*, *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, *New York Times*, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *Savannah Morning News*, and *The Washington Post*. With African-American and labor newspapers and journals, it was much harder to acquire a large geographical range.

¹ Michael Agnes and Charlton Laird, *Webster’s New World: Dictionary and Thesaurus* (New York: Hungry Minds, Inc., 1996), p. 374.

Therefore, I selected newspapers and journals that contained the most relevant material. For African-American periodicals, I examined the *Chicago Defender*, *The Crisis*, *The Competitor*, *The Crusader*, *The Independent*, *The Messenger*, and *New York Age*. The labor publications I studied were the *American Federationist*, *The Journal of Labor*, *The Labor Age*, *The Labor Review*, and *The New Justice*. I also looked at secondary material on labor, newspapers, and the First Red Scare. My reading of books on these topics led me to see the need for a project which examined the role mainstream newspapers played, as a big business, in undermining labor during the First Red Scare and attempted to get other journals to fall in line.

Examining the press's perspectives about the fall 1919 strikes presumes a grasp of the events leading into the strikes. The Bolshevik Revolution of November 1917 played a significant role in creating the environment that led to the First Red Scare. The Bolshevik Revolution, by rejecting most principles that older governments had been founded to secure and advancing the idea of world-wide proletarian revolution, represented one of the most critical problems facing the world both during and after World War I. The Boston police, steel, and coal strikes came on the heels of the Bolshevik takeover in Russia. Mainstream Americans worried about the Bolshevik disregard for traditional law and order and its potential impact in the United States, and mainstream media used fear of the Bolsheviks to help stifle the fall 1919 strikes.²

The mainstream press also used the public wrath toward the Industrial Workers of the World, (IWW or the "Wobblies") to discredit the fall 1919 strikes. The IWW's extremely radical policy and its willingness to combine words with action aroused national contempt. Founded in 1905 in Chicago by William S. Haywood, the IWW attracted all the dissident elements within the American labor movement and represented a combination of anarchists,

² Robert Murray, *The Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919, 1920* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1955), p. 122-123.

general strike advocates, direct-action Socialists, and syndicalists. The IWW desired the overthrow of the capitalistic system and called for direct economic pressure to do so.³

World War I's impact on the U.S. played a key role in adding to the mainstream public's fear of the Bolsheviks and the IWW. From the beginning of the war in 1914 to the entrance of the U.S. in April 1917, opposition groups worked to keep America out. They expressed three principal concerns. The first- -a dedication to traditional American isolationism- -worried about entangling alliances with European powers and the danger this posed to historic American values. Second, various sections and classes had much to gain from American participation, and others feared that they would use the crisis to their advantage. Third, anti-war sentiment believed that no cause could be so important to justify the massive killing of modern warfare.⁴

President Woodrow Wilson moved the U.S. towards war with his call "to make the world safe for democracy." Those who supported the war effort believed that the U.S. could help remake Europe in its image and move the continent away from such things as coercive government, irrationality, barbarism, and feudalism. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge insisted: "We are resisting an effort to thrust mankind back to forms of government, to political creeds and methods of conquest which we had hoped had disappeared forever from the world."⁵ America not only waged war against Germany but also the European past.⁶

Mainstream Americans struggled to deal with the changes of society during the war period in which four million men were drafted, many women left home to work in other industries, and African-Americans flocked from the agrarian south to northern industrial areas by

³ Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1988), pp. 105-106.

⁴ David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 21-23.

⁵ *Congressional Record*, Senate, 65th Congress, 1st session., April 4, 1917, 208.

⁶ Kennedy, *Over Here*, pp. 41-42.

the hundreds of thousands. During the war, Americans sanctioned a degree of government control over the economy which helped to stifle traditional economic individualism. Many mainstream Americans, from prewar progressives to conservative groups, feared the gradual disappearance of highly valued individual opportunity and responsibility.⁷

During this period, another issue bothered mainstream Americans: immigration. Through much of the 19th century, the idea of the “melting pot” - based on abundant land for all and familiarity with the cultural backgrounds of immigrants - convinced many Americans that immigrants could be assimilated into the country. But the influx of immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe and the decline of independent jobs, like farming, led to a loss of faith. Worry over the large numbers of immigrants in the mines and factories and the possibility of their forming an industrial proletariat led many elite Americans to call for the “Americanization” of such people.⁸

Historian John Higham maintained that “Americanizers” wanted to show newcomers that the United States valued their Old World legacy. Americanizers such as Jane Adams, Lillian Ward, and Josephine Roche praised the contributions of immigrants and provided them with homes and food. In doing so, such individuals sought to speed up the pace of assimilation.⁹

Higham claimed that the other source of the Americanization movement came from a loose coalition of older Americans who sought to keep their dominant social position secure, and businessmen who sought to keep a diverse labor force under control. These Americanizers

⁷ Richard Curry, *Conspiracy: Fear of Subversion in American History* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1955), pp. 149-150.

⁸ Kennedy, *Over Here*, pp. 63-64.

⁹ John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1955), p. xi.

worried about the presence of radicalism and insisted that immigrants needed to submit to the current system of order.¹⁰

Many of these worries presented themselves in public reaction to German-Americans. In 1917-1918, German-Americans served as the object of almost all U.S. nativistic fervor; they were the threatening intruders who refused to become good citizens. German-Americans who did not reject their heritage were declared “traitors.” Nativists called for the investigation of German-Americans and sent numerous letters to government officials detailing claims of subversive activities.¹¹

From the beginning of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, elite Americans in industry and government regarded Bolshevism as an unmistakable evil, and claimed the Bolsheviks committed duplicity when they signed the Brest-Litovsk treaty with the German enemy- -which took Russia out of the war. This helped to confirm earlier suspicions of the threat of Bolshevism. Subsequent Allied and American intervention in Russia served to increase public disdain towards the Bolsheviks, while nationalistic organizations, such as the American Defense Society and the National Security League, found success in inflaming public sentiment.¹²

Opposition to the war by radical groups, such as the IWW, helped smooth the transition among American nativists from anti-Germanism to anti-radicalism.¹³ Mainstream Americans associated the two groups together for other reasons. For instance, high government officials declared after the war that German leaders planned and subsidized the Bolshevik Revolution,

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

¹¹ Curry, *Conspiracy: The Fear of Subversion in American History*, pp. 149-150.

¹² Murray, *The Red Scare*, pp. 15-17.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 18.

despite lacking evidence to prove this. The fall strikes of 1919 escalated worry of alien radicals organizing a campaign of terror intended to bring down the federal government.¹⁴

Many reasons existed for the development of the climate that led to the Boston police strike, the first of the fall 1919 walkouts. Throughout 1919, Boston police became increasingly discontented with their poor pay, long work weeks, and horrendous working conditions. The city ignored their demands for shorter hours and a better working environment. As a result, the local policemen's organization, known as the Boston Social Club, started to make plans to affiliate with the American Federation of Labor (AFL). Due to rising fears of labor radicalism, many people believed that police unions might become powerful weapons in the hands of extremist labor unions. This played a significant role in Boston police commissioner Edwin Curtis's decision to forbid the police from joining the AFL.¹⁵

This did not faze the Boston officers. They increased their calls for affiliation with the AFL, and on August 1, officials of the Boston Social Club announced that, in spite of the commissioner's orders, they intended to follow through on plans to join the AFL. Ten days later, they formally asked the AFL for a local charter, which the AFL granted on August 15. Aroused by this direct challenge to his authority, the Commissioner accused nineteen leaders of the new union in court of violating his orders. The court found them guilty, but gave them suspended sentences. On September 8, he decided to revoke the suspended sentences and removed the nineteen union leaders from his force.¹⁶

The Boston policemen responded by holding a caucus. By the vote of 1134 to 2, they agreed to leave their posts the next evening. They believed that this would coerce Commissioner Curtis to return the nineteen suspended leaders to the force and recognize the Social Club's right

¹⁴ Curry, *Conspiracy: The Fear of Subversion in American History*, pp. 151-153.

¹⁵ Murray, *The Red Scare*, pp. 122-123.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 124-125.

to affiliate with the AFL. Instead Commissioner Curtis, with the backing of Massachusetts Governor Calvin Coolidge, gave a citizen volunteer force official status and placed it under the command of those loyal policemen who had stayed on the job. Curtis claimed that he had the affair under control, despite a severe outbreak of violence and looting throughout the city. It took the assistance of the State Guard to restore order in the city.¹⁷

On September 11, Governor Coolidge took personal command of the situation. The next day, AFL president Samuel Gompers urged the strikers to return to their posts and await the outcome of possible mediation. The policemen voted unanimously to accept this suggestion, but September 13, Commissioner Curtis, with the firm support of Coolidge, announced that the striking policemen would not be reinstated and that a whole new police force would be recruited. None of the strikers ever got their jobs back.¹⁸

Only two days after the police strike came the announcement that a nationwide steel strike would begin on September 22. The origin of this struggle traced back to August 1918, when a conference of twenty-four trade unions met in Chicago and established a National Committee for Organizing Iron and Steel Workers with Samuel Gompers as honorary chairman, John Fitzpatrick as acting chairman, and William Z. Foster as secretary-treasurer. Throughout 1918 and 1919 this committee attracted many, especially unorganized immigrant steel workers. Steel organizers responded by discharging known union men and forbidding local union meetings. These men worried about the influence of Foster, who had dabbled with radical groups such as the IWW in the past.¹⁹

Foster's crusade to organize the unorganized hit home with the numerous uneducated immigrants of a dozen different nationalities who were at the mercy of the steel trust. Citing

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 128-129.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 130-131.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 135-136.

horrible living and working conditions, steel workers joined the new steel union movement to force action. The AFL, in turn, backed the workers in their demands, and on June 20, 1919, asked Judge Elbert Gary, chairman of the United States Steel's Board of Directors, for a conference to discuss conditions in the steel industry and possible improvement of the workers' position. After no response, Fitzpatrick and Foster made another request for an arbitration conference. Upon the refusal of Gary, the National Committee for Organizing Iron and Steel Workers called a strike in September. Despite frantic urging by President Woodrow Wilson for conciliation, an estimated 275,000 workers left their jobs that day.²⁰

Just six weeks after the announcement of the steel strike, the third great fall strike- -coal- -began. Discontentment occurred because miners' wages remained fairly stagnant due to a wage agreement made in September 1917. This accommodation between the miners and owners called for fixed wages throughout the war, but not beyond April 1, 1920. Coal operators insisted that this accord was still binding, for although hostilities had ceased with the Armistice, the war had not been officially declared terminated. The miners, in response, maintained that since fighting had ended, the agreement was null and void. They called for the establishment of a new wage contract.²¹

At its annual convention held in Cleveland in September 1919, the United Mine Workers Union (UNW), under the leadership of John L. Lewis, advocated such demands as a nationwide contract, a 60 per cent wage increase, an eight-hour day, and a five-day week. Also, the convention called for the termination of the wartime contract by November 1, 1919, and the beginning of a nation-wide strike unless its demands were met and a new agreement signed. The

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 137-138.

²¹ Blair Coan, *The Red Web*, (Chicago: Northwest Publishing Company, 1925), pp. 44-55.

coal operators did not yield to any of these requests, and declared that no negotiations would take place with the UMW before April 1, 1920. This led to the UMW's strike call on November 1.²²

The call to strike led to Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer to request a meeting with President Wilson on October 29. At this conference, Palmer stressed the danger the impending strike would pose to the nation's economy and its radical overtones. He implored the President to take a strong stance, suggesting that the government order the miners not to strike. Following this meeting, Wilson reactivated the wartime Fuel Administration, and Palmer appealed to Federal Judge Albert A. Anderson of the Indiana District Court for an injunction to prevent the walkout. Judge Anderson complied by issuing a temporary order prohibiting the UMW leaders from any participation in the proposed struggle. Although UMW officials technically complied with the restraining order, 304,000 leaderless miners left the mines on November 1, 1919.²³

Throughout the strikes, mainstream newspapers ignored the Boston policemen, coal, and steel striker's horrendous living and working conditions. Mainstream editors and owners focused on the perceived presence of Bolshevism and the IWW. They insisted that the strikes worked towards giving such radical groups the ability to undermine the American economic and social order. By making it look like the Boston local government, steel, and coal owners were on the defensive against radicalism, mainstream newspapers helped to undermine the 1919 fall strikes. How and why they did so is a focus of this thesis.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

²³ Murray, *Red Scare*, pp. 156-158.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORIOGRAPHY

Few prominent books have examined the First Red Scare. The overwhelming majority of works have focused on the Second Red Scare and the post World War II period. Works on the First Red Scare include Robert Murray's book in 1955; *Red Scare, A Study in National Hysteria 1919-1920*. Murray claims that "nowhere in print does a full-length analysis of the Red Scare exist"²⁴ Murray attempts to fill this gap because he sees the Red Scare as "demonstrating clearly how easily the seeds of excessive hate and intolerance, which for the most part have remained dormant in modern American society, can suddenly develop into dangerous malignancies that spread with lightning rapidity through the whole social system."²⁵ Murray tells how World War I helped to cause a prevalent fear in American society. Many mainstream Americans believed that dangerous foreign ideologies had caused the bloodshed in Europe and could do the same in the United States. Prominent Americans saw organizations such as the IWW as trying to promulgate admittance of lowly immigrants into the Socialists and the IWW led to the strong reaction to 1919 fall strikes.²⁶

Murray's comment in 1955 on the lack of work done on the First Red Scare still holds true today. Very few works deal solely with this event. Consequently, larger studies that included the First Red Scare must serve as context. Thomas M. Brown and Richard O. Curry's book, *Conspiracy: The Fear of Subversion in American History*, looked at the fear of

²⁴ Murray, *Red Scare*, p. ix.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. ix-x.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. x-xi.

“outsiders” among mainstream Americans from colonial days to the present. They offer a section on the First Red Scare that details the rise of the Bolsheviks and their call to spread Marxist ideology throughout the world. Brown and Curry focus on President Wilson’s and Attorney General Palmer’s efforts to limit Bolshevik influence with American sending of troops to back anti-Bolshevik Russian troops in the Russian Civil War as well as their support of deportation of “undesirables.” Brown and Curry maintain that government worked together with larger business operatives by promoting nativist policies and ignoring civil rights. The federal government kept a scrutinizing eye on blacks, immigrants, and labor leaders and made it a vital goal to remove the most radical elements.²⁷

In research, no material that deals with this period has appeared recently. Providing a current study of the First Red Scare is one of the goals of this thesis for a number of reasons. Murray does not focus on such issues as race; yet this thesis seeks to illustrate how striking a role race played in mainstream reaction to the 1919 fall strikes. Brown and Curry’s book does not discuss the ideologies and organizations that already existed in the United States before the outbreak of World War I or with labor before or after World War I. Understanding the First Red Scare requires addressing these topics to fill these gaps. This thesis looks to fill in the gaps and connect them to the role that mainstream, African-American, and labor periodicals played in reaction to the 1919 fall strikes, a subject that no book on the First Red Scare has discussed.

David M. Kennedy’s *Over Here* provides a look at the United States during World War I. Kennedy’s book gives the reader a sense of the environment which helped to create the First Red Scare. Kennedy states his goal is to “illustrate the historic departure of the United States from

²⁷ Thomas M. Brown and Richard O. Curry, *Conspiracy: The Fear of Subversion in American History* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1972), pp. 154-155.

isolation and all that isolation implied.”²⁸ Kennedy shows that the war led numerous groups, such as labor workers, women, and blacks, to acquire high expectations of the war’s positive results. They believed that Wilson’s “war for democracy” would elevate them from their inferior status.²⁹

Kennedy claims that during the war, “The government had been required by the needs of conflict to treat workers well; work stoppages could not be permitted to stunt essential war production. To prevent interruptions, the government had to either prevent or persuade workers from striking.”³⁰ Labor leaders who worked closely with the government during the war period expected administrative favor to continue after the conflict.³¹

Kennedy focuses on the African-American presence. He insists that African-Americans stood behind the government despite having no guarantee of improvement in civil rights. African-Americans moved to the industrial North to take advantage of vast job opportunities. African-Americans became more confident in their overall status as they saw an increase in income. They believed that these positive changes would continue after the war.³²

Kennedy shows that once the war ended, the Wilson administration backed away from building close relations with labor and working on civil rights. This devastated minority hopes in continued growth and improved justice.³³ Kennedy claims that the destruction of such aspirations helped encourage the First Red Scare. “Some African-American leaders, such as *Messenger* editor A. Philip Randolph, looked to the Bolshevik success in Russia and believed that the Bolshevik rhetoric of class equality should extend to the United States. The American

²⁸ Kennedy, *Over Here*, pp. v-vi.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. vi.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 259-260.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 282-283.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 287-288.

business and political elite feared Bolshevik takeover of their power and fought its perceived presence in the United States.”³⁴

While Kennedy depicts how the World War I environment helped create the First Red Scare, he does not spend a great deal of time talking about it. Even though a couple of chapters mention 1919-1920, he pays very little attention to the 1919 fall strikes. Kennedy does not make use of mainstream, African-American, or labor periodicals at all in his book, although he talks about how elite businesses and politicians helped stymie labor and minority push for democratic progress. *Over Here* is an important work because it attempts to deal with the connection between World War I, failed dreams, and the First Red Scare, but Kennedy would be better served by taking his work further. If he had included a chapter that dealt with the 1919 fall strikes and the role mainstream, African-American, and labor journals played in the events throughout World War I and the years following, his arguments would have been greatly strengthened. This thesis looks to build on the sound work that Kennedy has done and broaden his case to include these elements.

Some books do examine the reaction of African-Americans publications to World War I. William G. Jordan's book, *Black Newspapers and America's War for Democracy, 1914-1920* studies the critical role African-American newspapers played in expressing African-American concerns and desires during this period. He focuses on such events as the Great Migration, segregation, lynching, and the inability to vote as the main issues the black press addressed. He insists that “the mainstream American media not only largely secluded black opinions, but also reflected and reinforced widely held racist assumptions and stereotypes.”³⁵ Therefore, many black journalists waged battle of behalf of “the race by printing indictments of America's racial

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 288-290.

³⁵ William G. Jordan, *Black Newspapers and America's War for Democracy, 1919-1920*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), p. 2.

injustices, monitoring, and criticizing the white media and the statements of white leaders, praising messages complimentary to blacks, and condemning racist utterances.”³⁶ Jordan affirms that African-American editors struggled with the decision to take such actions in an environment that called for loyalty to the war cause.

Mark Ellis’s work, *Race, War and Surveillance*, claims that African-American journalists expressed strong criticism of domestic problems before the entry of the U.S. into the war. He insists that the “European conflict meant very little to the great majority of African-Americans. They were far removed from the European struggle and saw its effects on them as being secondary and indirect.”³⁷ When the U.S. entered the war, this changed for many black editors. Ellis contends that many African-Americans, such as *Crisis* editor W.E.B. Du Bois, believed that a patriotic attitude during the war years would lead to improvements at home after the war. Therefore, critiques of the American economic and political order lessened greatly. Those who did not mince their words, like *Messenger* editors A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen, faced the disapproval of the federal government and its efforts to silence them. Ellis regards surveillance and the threat of jail time as the primary tools governmental officials used to keep critical African-American editors in line.³⁸

Jordan and Ellis do a sound job of illustrating the role that African-American periodicals played in black response to the war effort. They make it clear that black editors faced many challenges in what they could write and how they could express their opinions. Jordan and Ellis demonstrate that national government played a critical role in limiting the level of criticism African-American journalists expressed about the home front. While both *Black Newspapers and America’s War for Democracy, 1914-1920* and *Race, War and Surveillance* are excellent

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Mark Ellis, *Race, War, and Surveillance* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2001), p. 1.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 99-101.

books which give the reader profound insight into the major dilemmas African-American journalists faced during the war, they do not examine the post-war period.

Jordan discusses several key riots and idea of the New Negro. Jordan sees the “New Negro as an African-American consciousness characterized by confidence, assertiveness, and militancy that seemed to emerge after World War I.”³⁹ He connects the riots to this awareness - the main observation of his work about the post-World War I era. He does not focus on the interplay of labor with African-Americans during the post-war years and labor newspapers are not included in his study although they have much to say about the African-American presence during the war and the First Red Scare. He only devotes a few sentences to the Bolsheviks and the threat many white Americans perceived from African-Americans after the war. He omits the fall 1919 strikes which are the crux of the First Red Scare although African-American periodicals had much to say about the strikes. Since Jordan states in his title *Black Newspapers and America's War for Democracy, 1914-1920* that he would examine black newspapers into the post-war years, he would have been better served illustrating the response to such significant post-war events.

Ellis deals even less with the post-war years than Jordan. While Jordan has a chapter that looks at various post-war issues, *Race, War, and Surveillance* only has a few pages that discuss 1919. The First Red Scare is not included in his study yet the national government had a major influence on the reaction of African-American periodicals to the First Red Scare. Ellis's work would have been even more effective if he had studied these events. Jordan and Ellis's books provide much-needed studies on black newspapers and government surveillance in World War I, but they do not add to the scarce literature on the First Red Scare.

³⁹ Jordan, *Black Newspapers and America's War For Democracy*, p. 135.

Books on labor history like Joseph A. McCartin's *Labor's Great War: The Struggle for Industrial Democracy and the Origins of Modern American Labor Relations, 1912-1921* (1997) and Melvyn Dubofsky's *Labor in America* (1999) deal little with race. McCartin argues, "Progressive-era labor conflicts were primarily significant for giving voice to a widely expressed demand for industrial democracy, which was linked both to new union efforts to organize mass industries and in the emerging regulatory potential of the federal government."⁴⁰ McCartin insists that the outcome of the labor conflicts of this period was far more ambiguous than his interpretation implies. He claims, "those struggles did not witness the destruction of a workers' control impulse so much as they saw the triumph of an ideal-industrial democracy- -the meaning of which remained open to contest well beyond this period."⁴¹ McCartin attests that "appreciating this permits us to see the labor history of these years as something more than a decline and fall. Doing so allows the reader instead to see more clearly in this period the origins of those patterns that have shaped American labor relations for the rest of the 20th century."⁴²

McCartin's focus on industrial democracy and workers' efforts to organize mass industries is a topic that this thesis addresses. Certainly, labor leaders' efforts to give workers more of a voice and more participation in the daily running of businesses did not sit well with powerful corporate owners during this time who did not want to share control of their factories, mines, and plants with their workers. This fact played a crucial role in labor wars during the late 19th/early 20th centuries. McCartin does not deal with the fear of "others", race, class, and ideology that many other books did. This thesis seeks to advance his contribution by including all of these factors in the labor conversation.

⁴⁰ Joseph A. McCartin, *Labor's Great War: The Struggle for Industrial Democracy and the Origins of Modern American Labor Relations, 1912-1921* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), pp. 6-7.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 7-8.

Dubofsky, on the other hand, “believes U.S. organized labor has fallen as often as it has risen. This ‘roller-coaster’ effect, Dubofsky claims, “has led to many dramatic changes in relations between business and labor since the mid 19th century,”⁴³ For example, Dubofsky looks at the rise of new immigrants during the period from 1881-1921, the growth of nonwhites in the labor force, and the altering of the definition of work with fewer employees producing goods and more producing services and knowledge.⁴⁴ Dubofsky believes that all of this created a stress on the work force that exploded in the violence seen in the First Red Scare. But by ignoring mainstream, African-American, and labor periodicals in his conversation, Dubofsky misses a key element that would have supported his critical arguments with abundant visible evidence.

Of books that addressed nativism and immigration, one of the most prominent is John Higham’s *Strangers in Land*. Higham attempts to “show how American nativism evolved its own distinctive patterns, how it has ebbed and flowed under the pressure of successive impulses in American history, how it has fared at every social level and in every section where it left a mark, and how it has passed into action.”⁴⁵ Higham’s book focuses on American history from 1860-1925 and briefly covers the First Red Scare. Higham insists, “mainstream Americans had a distaste for eastern Europeans even before the influx of immigrants from the area.”⁴⁶ Higham uses the travels of prominent Americans to Europe and their firsthand experience with Eastern Europeans as evidence. To Higham, moving from preexisting hatred for Eastern Europeans as a whole to attacking the arrival of immigrants and their steady numbers in labor groups did not take much effort. He does not deal with the organizations formed by immigrants or issues of

⁴³ Melvyn Dubofsky and Foster R., *Labor in America: A History* (Wheeling, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1999), p. ix.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. ix-x.

⁴⁵ Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, p. xi.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

race and class that put tremendous strain on labor relations. He focuses on internal dislike and how that blossomed into Americanization.

Higham declares, “Americanization developed to hasten the assimilative process of so many ‘undesirable’ immigrants. During the Progressive era, nativists sought to combat immigration with education and social reform”⁴⁷ Leaders believed that educating “new” people and improving living conditions would lead to better citizens and the protection of the American way of life. While Americanizers made some progress, it took World War One to give the movement the push it needed. Officials looked at the bloodshed overseas and believed loyalties could lead to the same in the United States. Higham shows that Americanizers pushed for “Many Peoples, But One Nation.”⁴⁸ Nationalistic ideas and organizations flourished helped by the presence of the Bolshevik movement.

Higham believes that panic among American leaders toward the Marxist Revolution led to the continued call for Americanization after the war. “Desire to crush any Bolshevik presence at home led to the First Red Scare.”⁴⁹ Higham does little with labor organizations in his book and really only touches on the attempt of state governments to require English classes for foreigners as proof for his claims. This thesis will touch on many of his ideas, but it will develop his arguments made about the First Red Scare much more than *Strangers in the Land* does. If Higham had dealt with the presence of mainstream, African-American, and labor periodicals in his books his arguments would have been much stronger, because such publications provide keen evidence that illustrate many of his claims.

In a recent article addressing nativism and immigration, “Liberty, Coercion, and the Making of Americans,” Gary Gerstle argues that nativism has existed in the United States since

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 135-137.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 242-243.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 258.

the late 18th century and was not just a late 19th century/early 20th century phenomenon. Gerstle believes that “issues of class, race and national power have constrained and sometimes defeated immigrant efforts to be free of their past.”⁵⁰ Immigrants, due to their ethnic background and poverty, fought a hopeless struggle against nationalistic mainstream Americans to move toward a decent existence. Failure to gain a respectable way of life led to their reluctance to move away from native heritage toward Americanization. Gerstle does not deal with mainstream newspapers’ role in this argument. The wealthy owners and editors of the examined papers had a vital interest in maintaining class and race distinctions. They backed nationalism and portrayed its vitality throughout their editorials and cartoons for profits. African-American or labor periodicals would have helped Gerstle illustrate his arguments made about class and race by addressing the question; how did minorities and the lower classes respond to the nativistic pressures of mainstream America?

Finally, works on newspaper history such as Chalmers M. Roberts *The Washington Post: The First 100 Years* and Marshall Berges’s *The Life and Times of Los Angeles* might offer insights into my topic. Roberts believes the *Post* to be the leader of modern American journalism. He tells how the paper developed from a small Democratic journal into the media giant it is today. It is a congratulatory story that praises its owners and editors who paid great attention to government and to those who composed it.⁵¹ The lack of a critical eye toward the rise of a newspaper undermines this work. Roberts does not examine the fears prevalent in those running the paper toward race/immigrants and labor strife which played a key role in the language of the paper and likely influenced its readers to take a stance against labor. Roberts

⁵⁰ Gary Gerstle, “Liberty, Coercion, and the Making of Americans,” *The Journal of American History* (September 1997), pp. 557-558.

⁵¹ Chalmers M. Roberts, *The Washington Post: The First 100 Years* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1977), pp. x-xii.

further ignores many key historical developments during this time that shaped the development of the paper.

My research showed that many newspaper books follow a similar approach. They praise a particular paper, the owners and editors who helped develop it, and talk about its contributions to society. Berges's book proclaims the extraordinary metamorphosis of the *Los Angeles Times* and the city in the 20th century and dwells on the profound interconnection between Los Angeles and the *Times*.⁵² The *Times* helped Los Angeles to grow with money spent on developmental projects, advertisement of city and events, and participation of key *Times* officials in local politics.⁵³

This thesis will not focus on newspaper growth and positive developments; instead it will take a exacting eye to the newspapers to help the conversation about the role mainstream, African-American, and labor periodicals played in the First Red Scare. How can a reader truly understand newspaper history if the writer is not willing to talk about the faults of his subject?

My research did not locate any books which looked at the response of labor newspapers and journals to the First Red Scare- -a rather surprising circumstance because several labor organizations published periodicals during the World War I and post-war period. A primary goal of this thesis is to address the response of key labor figures and associations to such a chaotic period in labor history.

The secondary material examined provided excellent reading on individual topics; however, no books during my research addressed all of these issues together. While many of the works on labor history and the First Red Scare look at big business' efforts to put down labor uprisings during these periods, nothing examined the mainstream press as such a business. Yet

⁵² Marshall Berges, *The Life and Times of Los Angeles: A Newspaper, A Family, and A City* (New York: Athenaeum, 1984), pp. x-xii.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-16.

this is crucial for an understanding of the First Red Scare. Previous studies of these events have missed the crucial role mainstream media likely played in influencing readers to take an antagonistic attitude against strikers of the fall 1919. The media almost certainly played a key part in the outcome of events. The vast majority of these books deal little with the presence of African-American and labor periodicals during this era. Mainstream newspapers, with their big business mindset, and the national government worked together towards trying to stymie protests of those who found fault with the American system. How they did so is the focus of this thesis.

This study of mainstream, African-American, and labor periodicals convinced me that mainstream newspapers, run by wealthy people who wanted to protect their property, opposed labor agitation during the First Red Scare and characterized such activity to the public as radical and foreign. This meshed well with the policies of the federal government determined to keep all perceived Bolshevik interests out of the country. African-American and labor periodicals faced the decision either to go along with mainstream perspective and avoid the wrath of those in power or express their disdain for the economic, political, and social order. This circumstance helped to create disunion within the African-American and labor press- -another theme of study.

During the 1919 fall strikes, mainstream media painted the strikers as guilty without giving them a fair chance to prove their innocence. All the mainstream newspapers examined had a profound bias against labor because the owners and editors believed labor unrest to be a serious threat to their own material interests. The constant negative attitude against labor likely led their readers to see labor as a menace- -a final important theme of this thesis.

Chapter Three looks at mainstream newspaper reaction. How did mainstream media respond to the strikes? This chapter will describe their response while focusing on the government/big business perspective- -the crucial reason for why the mainstream responded as

they did. The Bolshevik presence played the critical role in the shaping of reaction. Chapter Four focuses on African-American periodicals and studies the division between those that supported big business/government mindset and those African-American publications who supported the strikes. This chapter shows the significant role big business and the national government played in creating disunity. Chapter Five looks at labor press reaction and takes much the same format as Chapter Four. It will deal with criticisms that labor papers leveled at each other and towards African-American periodicals. Samuel Gompers is a key figure in this chapter. Finally, the Conclusion will explain the importance of what this project has added to the historiography of this period.

CHAPTER 3

FIRST RED SCARE STRIKES: THE RESPONSE OF MAINSTREAM MEDIA

Mainstream Americans looked at the strikes of fall 1919 as a direct threat to their economic and political power. Government officials and business elite believed that the strikers were largely influenced by the Bolsheviks and the Industrial Workers of the World. Fearing Bolshevik and IWW rhetoric that called for massive changes in the economic, political, and social order in the country, such authorities desperately sought to put a quick end to the strikes. Mainstream newspapers served as the voice of elite white America. Owned and managed by wealthy editors, they worked hand-in-hand with government administrative leaders to combat the strikes.

When the Boston police strike began, mainstream journals throughout the country kept their readers fully informed of developments in Boston. On September 10, the *New York Times* ran this front page story: “BOSTON POLICE FORCE OUT ON STRIKE: MOBS SMASH WINDOWS AND LOOT STORIES-Gangs of Boys Loot Shops- Hoodlums Break Windows and Ring in Many False Fire Alarms- Patrolmen Use Revolvers-Disperse Mobs in Roxbury, South Boston, West End, and Other Sections of the City.”⁵⁴ The next day, the *Times* wrote an editorial entitled: “The Boston Police Strike.” It claimed that the striking policemen thoughtlessly followed the Bolsheviks and their anti-social ideas and consequently tried to form a union and

⁵⁴ *New York Times*, September 10, 1919, p. 1.

called for a charter by the American Federation of Labor. The *Times* insisted: “A policeman has no more right to belong to a union than a soldier or sailor. He must be ready to obey orders, the orders of superiors, not those of the outside body. One of his duties is the maintenance of order in case of strike violence. The disorderly and criminal element welcomes and takes advantage of police strikes.”⁵⁵

The *NYT* attacked the policemen and the AFL although the AFL was a nonpartisan organization that fought mainly for craft unionism. It allowed only skilled workers to join and did not seek significant change in the existing economic order. This differed greatly from the mass-based radical movement of the IWW which called for all workers, regardless of class, race, and sex, to join in an effort to overthrow the existing capitalistic system. The attack on the AFL, a tame union after the war that had supported the war effort and worked with the president in an effort to contain strikes, shows clearly the anti-labor attitudes present among many elite Americans, including newspaper owners and editors. Mainstream periodicals used the chaos in Boston to back their claims that radicalism posed a threat to the American way of life by taking away those sworn to protect law and order.⁵⁶

The *Washington Post* followed: “FATAL RIOT IN BOSTON-One Man Killed, Woman Shot, and Officer Beaten by Mob.”⁵⁷ The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* declared: “STATE GUARD CALLED IN BOSTON POLICE STRIKE- -Lawlessness Becomes Rampant, With Looting of Stores and Attacks on Women, and Open Gambling- Wagons Full of Goods Taken From Stores- Cafes Are Looted and Show Windows in Business Section Are Broken-Gunmen From Other Cities Come In.”⁵⁸ In these descriptions and others throughout the country, the media made

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, September 11, 1919, p. 12.

⁵⁶ McCartin, *Labor's Great War*, pp. 189-190.

⁵⁷ *Washington Post*, September 10, 1919, p. 1.

⁵⁸ *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, September 10, 1919, p. 1.

Boston look like a city where murderers, thieves and rapists ran rampant through the streets. Newspapers claimed that the anarchy visible throughout Boston directly corresponded with the policemen's decision to leave their posts.⁵⁹

The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* ran a cartoon entitled: "IN CULTURED BOSTON!" In it, a policeman twirls his nightstick around in circles, whistles a song, smiles, and asserts "It don't interest me! I'm on STRIKE!" In the background, people are fighting with each other, throwing bricks up in the air, and swinging bats around. Guns lie all over the ground. All of this takes place next to a grocery store. Above the crowd are the words RIOT, MURDER, AND LOOTERS.⁶⁰

Violent acts occurred during this period, including the removing of spare tires from parked automobiles by little groups of hoodlums and their knocking off hats of innocent pedestrians, the smashing of windows, stealing of goods on display, and the overturning of fruit stands by lawless characters.⁶¹ While Boston did not remain peaceful during the strike, it hardly merited the description of rape and murder that ran so visibly in editorials and front-pages of mainstream newspapers.

An editorial in the *Los Angeles Times* entitled "Anti-Law Policemen" stated that there had never been a critical strike in the United States without resort to violence, or where the leaders of the strikers had not told them to ignore the laws and injunctions relating to picketing and boycotted. The *LA Times* claimed that members of the Boston police force who joined a policemen's union violated the oath they took when they became members of the unit and the rules of department, which they had been sworn to observe. The editorial asserted that trusting the enforcement of the law to such "law-breakers" led to September 10th's rioting and looting.

⁵⁹ Curry, *Conspiracy: The Fear of Subversion in American History*, p. 153.

⁶⁰ *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, September 14, 1919, p. 8.

⁶¹ Murray, *Red Scare*, p. 126.

Finally, it insisted that if the country was to have a government of law and order, the police officers under that government could not join the AFL.⁶²

Such editorials and cartoons indicated that the media blamed the police for the problems in Boston. But they also found something much bigger at fault: radicalism. All major newspapers in Boston immediately labeled the strike decision “Bolshevistic,” and warned that the venture was foredoomed to failure because “behind Boston in this skirmish with Bolshevism stands Massachusetts, and behind Massachusetts stands America.”⁶³ The *Boston Herald*, in particular, lamented the fact that “Bolshevism should thus evidence itself in the very city which had cradled American democracy and had given the American Revolution birth.”⁶⁴ It made this claim despite having no direct evidence that the Bolsheviks had anything to do with the strike.

Other newspapers throughout the country took up the cry of “radicalism” emanating from the Boston press. The *New Orleans Times-Picayune* published an editorial titled “Sovietism in Boston.” It used the term “Sovietism” instead of Bolshevism to describe the same reason for the strike. It claimed that “Sovietism” had to be stopped or the U.S. would head down the same path as Russia. It mocked the policemen’s efforts with the term “so-called strike.”⁶⁵

A *New York Times* editorial entitled “Disorder in Boston” echoed the editorial of the *Times-Picayune* by saying the Bolsheviks had imported their “exotic revolutionary ideas” into the United States. It demanded an all-out effort to stop the “experiment” in Boston. It insisted, “no truce or compromise could be made to those who put the union, the consensus of a few or a

⁶² *Los Angeles Times*, September 11, 1919, p.10.

⁶³ Murray, *Red Scare*, pp. 125-126.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

⁶⁵ *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, September 12, 1919, p. 10.

few million individual wills, desires, and interests, above that of the public will expressed ‘unflinchingly’ by police officers faithful to their functions.”⁶⁶

Adhering to their call to defend law and order, the media overwhelmingly supported Boston Police Commissioner Curtis and Massachusetts Governor Coolidge’s decision to bar the strikers from returning to the force, even after they voted to return to duty. Taking the cue from Coolidge, mainstream newspapers all over the nation painted the strikers as “deserters.” The *Savannah Morning News* proclaimed: “BOSTON’S STRIKING POLICEMEN NOT TO BE PUT BACK ON FORCE-Police Commissioner Curtis, Backed by Attorney General and Governor Coolidge, Refuses to Reinstate ‘Deserters.’”⁶⁷ The *Los Angeles Times* asserted: “POLICEMEN CAN’T HAVE JOBS BACK-Governor Tells Gompers That Places Are Vacant-Further Conferences with the Deserters are Off and New Men Will be Recruited.”⁶⁸ The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* declared: “POLICE STRIKERS GET NO CLEMENCY-Governor Coolidge Wires Gompers Sovereignty of Massachusetts Must be Upheld.”⁶⁹ In these stories, the media painted the decision as sending a message to the “radicals” that the nation would make a stand to protect the American way of life. Law and order would prevail above those who wanted to bring Bolshevik revolution to the U.S.

At no time during this or earlier coverage did the press mention the labor conditions that the police sought. Mainstream media ignored the fact that the Boston police endured low salaries, long hours, and poor working conditions. City administration paid little attention to the strikers’ attempts to get relief. While some policemen may have listened to radical labor groups in an effort to get change, no evidence has been found that shows a direct connection between

⁶⁶ *New York Times*, September 11, 1919, p. 12.

⁶⁷ *Savannah Morning News*, September 13, 1919, p. 1.

⁶⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, September 13, 1919, p. 1.

⁶⁹ *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, September 14, 1919, p. 1.

the striking policemen and Bolshevism. The striking officers believed that joining the AFL, a non-radical labor union, would help in their fight to alleviate their suffering. Nothing has ever been discovered that illustrates that the striking policemen sought to overthrow the government and destroy American law-and-order.⁷⁰

When the nationwide steel strike began on September 22, the press stressed its magnitude. The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* proclaimed: “THOUSANDS OF WORKERS OUT IN BIG STEEL STRIKE-Union Leader Claims Indications Are That About 280,000 Men Are Idle.”⁷¹ The *Washington Post* maintained: “EXODUS FROM STEEL PLANTS UNDER WAY-Many Union Men Quit in Pittsburgh District-Employers Due for Surprise-Leaders of Workers Predict.”⁷²

The size of the strike shocked the nation. Up to the very moment of the walkout, the public, along with the President, had hoped that the struggle would somehow be averted and that conservative AFL officials would hold the steel “fanatics” in line. With the descriptions of the large number of strikers, many people believed that radicalism had gained the upper hand. Mainstream newspapers reflected this attitude with attacks on National Committee for Organizing Iron and Steel Workers secretary-treasurer William Z. Foster and his previous days in the IWW.⁷³

The *Los Angeles Times* wrote of Foster: “Foster, these days, parades under the title of ‘Syndicalism.’ Syndicalists seek the destruction of society and are opposed to order. They are of the same belief as that of the IWW as both are the sinister and diabolical foes of human peace

⁷⁰ Murray, *Red Scare*, pp., 133-134.

⁷¹ *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, September 22, 1919, p. 1.

⁷² *Washington Post*, September 20, 1919, p. 1.

⁷³ Curry, *Conspiracy: The Fear of Subversion in American History*, pp. 154-155.

and happiness. Foster's desire is to absolutely revolutionize society as it is presently constituted."⁷⁴

The *New York Times* editorial, "The Real Purpose of the Steel Strike," claimed that the radical element in the AFL engineered the movement for the steel walkout. The editorial asserted that these "extremists" sought to make war upon the steel industry and attempt to establish their control over it. It insisted that Foster led the "revolutionary" charge. The *Times* recalled a pamphlet that Foster had written which contained passages consistent with the teachings of Bolsheviks Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky. It maintained that the pamphlet attacked capitalism and called for the takeover of America's industries by the low-class workers.⁷⁵

In an editorial titled "Recantation of Mr. Foster," the *Washington Post* affirmed that Foster still clung to the "gospel of revolution," that his ideas of the "fundamental, basic principles of trade unionism" remained unmodified, and that his contempt for law and order in the United States still drove him. It insisted that the steel strikers were following the leadership of the same "unreconstructed radical" who in 1911 urged "revolution, sabotage, and force" against the American government.⁷⁶

The *Post* ignored the plight of many steel workers who were uneducated immigrants of a dozen different nationalities and completely at the mercy of the steel magnates. Murray illustrates that such workmen experienced wretched living conditions, many of their homes being "mere unpainted shacks without running water or plumbing."⁷⁷ Almost half the men worked twelve hours a day, seven days a week; the whole industry averaged a weekly workweek of

⁷⁴ *Los Angeles Times*, October 4, 1919, p. 10.

⁷⁵ *New York Times*, September 22, 1919, p. 10.

⁷⁶ *Washington Post*, September 25, 1919, p. 8.

⁷⁷ Murray, *Red Scare*, p. 136.

slightly under sixty-nine hours. An unskilled steel laborer made only an average annual income of \$1,466, while a family of five in 1919 required an estimated minimum subsistence of \$1,575. Some radical steel strikers did exist, but composed an extremely small minority. The typical striker sought merely to change the working conditions and provide more money for his/her family.⁷⁸

Had no violence occurred during the strike, it might have been more difficult for the general public to accept wholeheartedly these charges of revolution. But as the strike proceeded, violence escalated. Riots occurred between police hired by steel owners and strikers, strikers and strikebreakers, nationalities and races. Steel companies used ruthless methods to punish the strikers. For example, hired security agents broke up union meetings, dispersed picket lines, and clubbed orderly participants. The mainstream press did not describe any of these methods. Instead, it wrote about riot disorders in such a manner as to make it appear that the steel officials were always on the defensive against those who were attacking law and order. Newspapers dealt mostly with the evidence of radicalism involved and related all other factors to it.⁷⁹

Actually, the vast majority of the disturbances contained no traces of radicalism whatsoever. However, one riot did occur that manifested some evidence of radical activity. Therefore, the media heavily publicized this event. Occurring at Gary, Indiana on October 4, this incident increased the fear of labor radicalism and hurt the steel strikers' cause.⁸⁰

From the beginning of the steel strike, press reports from Gary emphasized the radicalism of the strike leaders in the city. Steel companies decided on a showdown and imported large numbers of African-American strikebreakers in order to break the influence of the strike leaders

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 136-137.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 145-146.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

in the city. On the 4th, violent rioting ensued. Newspapers around the country stressed its chaotic effects.⁸¹

The *New Orleans Times-Picayune* declared: “THOUSANDS JOIN IN RIOT IN STREETS OF GARY CITY-Strikers and Sympathizers Hurl Bricks and Stones at Officers of Law Near Mammoth Steel Factories-Hospitals Filled With Injured Men-Squads Battle With Squads as Combat Surges Through Thoroughfares of Municipality-May Call Militia.”⁸² The *New York Times* asserted: “POLICE RIOT GUNS PACIFY STRIKERS IN GARY STREETS-Fifty are Injured and Fifty Men Arrested in Open Fight with the Police.”⁸³ The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* proclaimed: “TROOPS ORDERED TO GARY AFTER SERIOUS RIOTING-Steel Strikers and Others Hurl Bricks and Stones in Fight with Police and Deputies; Many Reported Hurt.”⁸⁴ These accounts and others like them wanted to convince their reader that all semblance of order had been lost. By painting such a dramatic picture, those running these newspapers hoped to get their readers thinking constantly about the seriousness of the strikes and provoke a strong reaction.

The outbreak of violence, which state militia failed to quell, almost certainly stirred up public fear. Reading these stories very likely led people to wonder when it would happen in their own neighborhoods. Responding to the Gary violence, the federal government decided to send regular army soldiers to the city under General Leonard Wood. Immediately after his arrival, the general placed Gary under martial law, forbade assembly in the city’s streets or parks, and made the carrying of firearms a major offense. He then asked Army Intelligence to begin a thorough

⁸¹ Curry, *Conspiracy: The Fear of Subversion in American History*, pp. 136-137.

⁸² *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, October 5, 1919, p. 1.

⁸³ *New York Times*, October 5, 1919, p. 1.

⁸⁴ *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 5, 1919, p. 1.

investigation of the alleged radical influence among the workmen in the city. Mainstream media focused on the Bolshevik/Red connection to the riot.⁸⁵

The *New York Times* wrote: “GENERAL WOOD’S MEN RESTORE ORDER IN GARY STRIKE ZONE.” The *Times* insisted: “It was evident that the city officials of Gary were extremely nervous. The strikers, nearly all of whom are aliens, and a good many of whom cannot speak English, paraded the streets in defiance of the municipality, and declared their determination to continue the street demonstrations. The police were unable to stop them. The worst influence came from certain Red agitators, whose only desire seemingly was to foment trouble.”⁸⁶ The *Times* editorial made it clear that it saw a direct linkage between immigrants, Bolshevism, and strikes.

The *Savannah Morning News* stated: “SOLDIERS ARREST ALLEGED RADICALS-Revolutionary Literature Seized.”⁸⁷ The *St. Louis Post Dispatch* declared: “FEDERAL AGENTS AT GARY RAID HOMES OF MORE RADICALS-Firearms, Red Flags, and Revolutionary Literature Seized.”⁸⁸ Along with events in Gary, the *Post-Dispatch* wrote of Bolshevik and IWW trouble at home. On October 11, the *Post-Dispatch* said: “U.S. AGENTS HERE ARREST NEGRO IWW ORGANIZER-Latter Denies He Is Financed by Bolsheviks-Paid by Communist Branch of Socialists, He Says.” It maintained that the African-American passed out the circulars and pamphlets to other African-Americans. The pamphlets urged others to join the IWW so they could destroy the common enemy, the employers.⁸⁹ These papers expressed viewpoints echoed by many southern and Midwestern papers. They attempted to connect Bolshevism to African-Americans and harped on the threat this posed to mainstream Americans.

⁸⁵ Curry, *Conspiracy: The Fear of Subversion in American History*, pp. 137-138.

⁸⁶ *New York Times*, October 8, 1919, p. 1.

⁸⁷ *Savannah Morning News*, October 11, 1919, p. 1.

⁸⁸ *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 10, 1919, p. 1.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, October 11, 1919, p. 1.

The *New York Times* claimed: “REDS CALL GARY STRIKERS TO RISE AND OUST TROOPS- Revolutionary ‘Proclamation’ of ‘Communist Party’ Found on a Worker-Would Take Over State-Asks Workingmen to Wrest from Capital Means by Which ‘Capitalism is Maintained’-Military Ready to Act-Their Commander Calls Pamphlet the ‘Most Dangerous’ He Has Ever Seen.”⁹⁰ Responding to the steel strike and the Gary riot, the *Los Angeles Times* ran an ad paid for by the American League of Industrial Freedom that read:

“An American believes in the institutions of our government; supports them; defends them from attack; either from without or within. An American doesn’t strike for what he wants or look for it with a torch; he works for it; and he generally gets it. An American is a champion of law and order. He will sacrifice his life, if need be, for the country. He will not close our ports to European immigrants; but he will insist on turning back any whom the government considers unfit; he will assist in deporting them if they are found plotting against our government or against American institutions after they have landed.”⁹¹

While running an ad it itself does not constitute evidence of bias, it does when it does not include a counter-response to it. The *Times* showed its support of pro-government, anti-labor organizations like the American League of Industrial Freedom by giving it a voice in its pages. The research for this thesis discovered no ads which took the perspective of the strikers. An objective paper would have given opportunities for both sides to speak. The *Times* and its bias represent the overwhelming support mainstream newspapers gave big business and government. The reader would very likely respond with a call for immigrants to be assimilated or be deported after reading this ad.

The *Savannah Morning News* published an editorial entitled “Need to Be Americanized.” It asserted that men who came to the U.S. “to live, to have an influence upon the country and its people,” should be “Americanized” and “Americanization” could not begin until the “alien”

⁹⁰ *New York Times*, October 13, 1919, p. 1.

⁹¹ *Los Angeles Times*, October 7, 1919, p. 12.

learned to speak and read English. It affirmed the importance of American leadership to see to it that “aliens” who came to the U.S. learned the native tongue of the country. The *Morning News* claimed: “Bolshevism would find less fertile ground for the sowing of its seed if it tried to sow among the vigorous flowers of true Americanization.”⁹²

Describing the connection between Bolshevism and the IWW, the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* wrote: “REVOLUTIONARY PLANS OF IWW-Organization’s Attorney Announces Its Endorsement Steel Strike-Tells of Alliance with Bolsheviks.” The *Times-Picayune* insisted that the IWW, Bolshevik, and Russia industrial workers had used the last two years to prepare for a “revolutionary purpose.” All had been captivated by the successes of Lenin and Trotsky in Russia. It declared that all the groups sought to create a “new society in the U.S. within the shell of the old.”⁹³ While the words of these groups provided evidence for the *Times-Picayune*’s claims, no hard evidence existed to prove the IWW, Bolshevik, and Russia industrial workers’ desire to form a new nation out of the U.S.

The media coverage of the discovery of “Red” material in Gary and its constant emphasis on the words “revolution” and “bolshevism” probably led people across the nation to see the Gary riots as further proof of the radicalism of all steel workers. Ultimately many steel strikers reversed course and decided to go back to work, thus essentially putting an end to the strike.

The coal strike led to further escalation of fears of radicalism. At a time when the public condemned steel workers for the “Bolshevik” actions, it was inevitable that similar censure would apply to the miners. From the moment the mine leaders announced the strike decision, such super-patriotic and anti-labor elements as American Legion posts, the National Security League, and the American Defense Society begged congressmen for action to prevent a

⁹² *Savannah Morning News*, October 14, 1919, p. 8.

⁹³ *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, October 21, 1919, p. 1.

“Bolshevik revolution” in the coal industry. Government officials, both state and federal, soon took up the cry of “radicalism.” Congressional leaders declared that the proposed strike was a “radical innovation” and the strike decision showed that radical labor had a “stranglehold upon the throat of the country.” President Wilson described the coming conflict as among other things “one of the gravest steps ever proposed in this country,” “the most far-reaching plan ever presented,” and “a grave moral and legal wrong.” The President concluded that a coal strike in the face of approaching winter was “not only unjustifiable, it is unlawful.”⁹⁴

The press responded to these comments by reiterating with zeal all these expressions of official and conservative sentiment on the dangers of the proposed coal strike.⁹⁵ The front page of the *Washington Post* declared: “PRESIDENT DECLARES STRIKE UNLAWFUL.”⁹⁶ The *New York Times* asserted: “STRIKE A CRIME-WILSON.”⁹⁷ The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* replayed Wilson’s words through a cartoon. Entitled: “Where the Coal Strike Strikes!,” it shows two older women and a young girl. All the women are dressed up in rags, shivering, and looking to the fireplace. Their window is broken, the walls are cracked, and dirt lies all over the floor. They have no coal and don’t know what to do. In the background, a mouse states: “And Winter’s Almost Here!”⁹⁸

Many newspapers ran highly emotional editorials emphasizing the radical aspects of the situation and demanding swift action. A *Los Angeles Times* editorial, “Whose Country Is This?” maintained: “America is a sanctuary to be defiled by the Bolsheviks and IWW without showing resentment in a manner so stern and uncompromising that criminal refuges and plotters of revolution will give it a wide birth thereafter.” The editorial insisted: “The coal and steel strikes

⁹⁴ Murray, *Red Scare*, pp. 155-156.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

⁹⁶ *Washington Post*, October 30, 1919, p. 1.

⁹⁷ *New York Times*,

⁹⁸ *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, November 2, 1919, p. 1.

are the component of an offensive organized by the ‘revolutionists’ in the union-labor movement to seize political power through industrial action.” But the *Times* claimed: “The American people are prepared to demonstrate the superiority of their rights over the alleged rights of the labor unions. Americans will demand that labor unions divest themselves of the radical and criminal elements that continuously used them to threaten revolution and promote violence.”⁹⁹

When miners left their jobs on November 1st, even though they had a federal injunction which forbade them to do so, the media became even more convinced that bolshevism was involved. The *Washington Post* proclaimed: “COAL STRIKE SPREADS-435,230 OUT-PALMER PLEDGES TO HALT CONSPIRACIES OF RADICALS.” The *Post* talked of how Attorney General Palmer gave instructions to local authorities to keep close touch with the coal situation in their districts and report promptly any converted action “by any two or more people” to limit facilities for transporting, producing, supplying, storing, or dealing in coal, or to exact excessive prices. The *Post* insisted that the purpose of this order was preventing radical agitators among the idle coal miners from obtaining leadership.¹⁰⁰ Under the headline “PALMER DECLARES LAW IS CHALLENGED AND NATION’S LIFE ATTACKED,” the *NYT* expressed the belief that “Bolshevik radicals” had orchestrated the coal strike as they had the steel and Boston police.¹⁰¹ The *Chicago Tribune* proclaimed: “NATION SCANS STRIKE LEADERS WITH EAGLE EYES.” The *Tribune* sought to reassure readers by claiming the federal government would do everything “humanly possible” to protect the “American system” against the “radical” strikers. It asserted that several of the mine fields were reported to be filled

⁹⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, November 1, 1919, p. 10.

¹⁰⁰ *Washington Post*, November 1, 1919, p. 1.

¹⁰¹ *New York Times*, November 1, 1919, p. 1.

with aliens of radical tendencies and that the government sought to get those men away from the mine regions and ultimately out of the country.¹⁰²

The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* published an editorial entitled “Law or Anarchy.” It insisted that by disregarding the injunction, the strike leaders defied the executive, law officers of the government, and the mandate of the court. The leaders showed that they were in open rebellion against all government authority. They sought to repudiate the “government of law” and adopt one of force under which organized society and all means of defending rights and maintaining order vanished.¹⁰³ Moving from the strike to race, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* wrote: “SINISTER RADICAL PROPAGANDA FOUND IN NEGRO PRESS-Reports to Government Show Educated Men of Race Are Urging Bolshevik Principles-Radical Equality Discussed.” The *Post-Dispatch* insisted that certain African-American leaders sought to “prey on the minds of law abiding, peaceful African-Americans and make them a fighting force of race antagonists.” It maintained that these leaders sought “first, an ill-governed reaction toward race rioting; second, the threat of retaliatory measures in connection with lynching; third, the more openly expressed demand for social equality; fourth, the identification of the African-American with such radical organizations as the IWW, and an outspoken advocacy of the Bolshevik doctrine.”¹⁰⁴ The *Post-Dispatch* expressed these extremely critical words without ever specifying which African-American leaders and publications it was accusing. The editorial presents no direct evidence to back its claims. It simply sought to link natural Southern white disdain for African-American calls for change in a segregated system with Bolshevism. By proclaiming such words loudly and long enough, the *Post-Dispatch* sought to instill fear in its readers.

¹⁰² *Chicago Tribune*, November 2, 1919, p. 1.

¹⁰³ *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, November 1, 1919, p. 8.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, November 5, 1919, p. 1.

In the middle of the coal strike, Massachusetts held its gubernatorial election. Normally, a state election would not have a great deal of influence on the course of national events. But this one did because it became a battleground for those for and against the strikes. It provided an excellent example of the intense passions that had overtaken the country. Liberal labor elements, progressives, and radicals all attacked Coolidge's past administration, and Boston ex-policemen stumped the state in order to defeat him. Conservative groups, on the other hand, strongly backed the governor and claimed that he had saved Boston from Bolshevism during the police strike. They insisted that a vote for Coolidge was a vote for "law and order."¹⁰⁵

The media kept the nation updated on developments in the state and celebrated Coolidge's re-election. The *New York Times* proclaimed: "COOLIDGE SWEEPS BAY STATE-Overwhelming Plurality Given to Governor of Law and Order." The attempt to appeal to prejudice against the state failed, concluded the *Times*, and the election result showed that "the men of Massachusetts were not labor men, policemen, union men, poor men, rich men, or any other class of men first. They were Americans first."¹⁰⁶ In an editorial titled "For Law and For Order," the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* maintained that Coolidge "saved" Boston from "radicalism" during the police strike. By standing up to the striking policemen, the *Post-Dispatch* claimed, Coolidge had "quelled disorder, stopped lawlessness, and saved the 'good' name of Boston and Massachusetts from further tarnish." It mocked those who opposed Coolidge by calling them "offended radicals." It insisted that the people who had voted for Coolidge made a stand for law and order and were with the men who had "saved Boston from anarchy and Massachusetts from disgrace."¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Murray, *Red Scare*, pp. 158-159.

¹⁰⁶ *New York Times*, November 5, 1919, p. 1.

¹⁰⁷ *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, November 5, 1919, p. 8.

In an editorial “The Strikers Have Struck Out,” the *Los Angeles Times* wrote that Governor Coolidge of Massachusetts had been “showered with congratulations” from all parts of the country for his “noble” victory over the labor union “agitators” and the “emissaries of Bolshevism.” It insisted that “the Bolshevik front line” was broken and to Governor Coolidge and Massachusetts was due the credit for victory that “would resound in the annals of the republic.” Massachusetts fully sustained the affirmation, often made by the paper, that “two governments, one of the law and one of the labor unions, could not exist in the U.S. at the same time.” The *Times* maintained that government by intimidation is “repugnant to every loyal American.” The radical elements of the labor unions had organized strike after strike until the very word was an “offense in the public nostrils.” Now the Massachusetts election had proved that the radicals had “struck until they had finally struck out.”¹⁰⁸

This election proved a serious blow to both the steel and coal strikers. In the face of such definite evidence that the public tired of industrial unrest, disaffection spread among labor’s ranks and some striking miners followed disheartened steel workers in returning to their jobs. Mainstream media paid little attention to this evidence that most steel strikers were not radicals, but only struggling people trying to better their living conditions.¹⁰⁹ Coolidge’s success also served to speed the plans of those officials who advocated more stringent action against the striking coal miners. This encouraged Judge Anderson on November 8th to make the original temporary injunction permanent and order the United Mine Worker leaders to cancel the strike order by 6 P.M. on November 11th. After two days of meeting, the UMW Executive Committee agreed to end the strike.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, November 8, 1919, p. 10.

¹⁰⁹ Murray, *Red Scare*, p. 162.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 162-163.

With the calling off of strike on 11th, United Mine Workers Union President John L. Lewis appealed the following statement: “We are Americans, we cannot fight our government.” The leaders stressed the miners’ loyalty to the country.¹¹¹ The press complimented the decision and government’s stand. The *Washington Post* editorial, “Has Saved the Situation,” claimed that the United States government had “saved the situation” in America. There would be no successful “social revolution” in the U.S. as there had been in Europe. The economic system that had made so many Americans “rich, happy, and strong” would be preserved for the next generation.¹¹²

The media also kept the public informed of those strikers who did not return to the mines. For the next month, the press heaped further condemnation upon the many miners who did not return to work. The American people read such headlines as this by the *New York Times*: “REDS KEEPING SOME MEN FROM WORK-Radicals oppose Lewis.”¹¹³ The American public also saw numerous editorials which proposed a solution: deportation. The *New Orleans Times-Picayune* editorial, “Deporting Aliens,” insisted that deportation proved the best weapon to use so the entire radical movement could be crushed and “seeds would not be allowed to scatter and propagate.” Deportations provided the only response against the “trouble breeders” that promised any success. America had to be rid of Bolsheviks and those elements most dangerous to law and order. A vigorous deportation policy would soon free America from the danger of Bolshevism.¹¹⁴ The *Times-Picayune* used its anti-foreign sentiment to postulate a clear link to Bolshevism and its call for deportation.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 163.

¹¹² *Washington Post*, November 12, 1919, p. 10.

¹¹³ *New York Times*, November 15, 1919, p. 1.

¹¹⁴ *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, November 16, 1919, p. 8.

The *Los Angeles Times* ran an editorial titled “Deport the Alien Agitators.” Despite having no proof, it insisted that thousands of unnaturalized foreigners in the country were engaged in Bolshevik activities. These aliens, the editorial maintained, had abused the right of “sanctuary” extended to them by plotting revolution and inciting others to overthrow the government and establish a “soviet despotism” on its ruins. “Red” zealots from Russia and Hungary had been pouring into the U.S. during the last two years under various disguises and had been welcomed by the IWW. Together, the two had “gnawed away at constitutional government like a rat eating into cheese.” The *Times* claimed that the trade unions had welcomed these foreign workmen because they were a class that could help start a radical labor movement. It affirmed that deportations were the only remedy for this “evil.”¹¹⁵

Such coverage kept the fear of radicalism intact and played a significant role in Wilson’s decision to authorize the Fuel Administration to offer a 14 per cent wage increase with the promise of establishment of an arbitral commission. In the face of this plan, and the increasingly adverse public sentiment, the solidarity of the insurgent miners rapidly weakened. On December 10, the miners accepted the president’s plan and the strike ended.

Mainstream newspapers expressed such words because their rich owners and editors had an intense desire to protect this key source of wealth against a perceived threat. Many came from a traditional Protestant, Anglo-Saxon background that abhorred anyone outside of it. The sons-in-law of Joseph Medill, Robert Sanderson McCormick, and Robert Wilson Patterson, ran the *Chicago Tribune* during the fall 1919 strikes. They took over control of the *Tribune* in 1899 from Medill and followed his antagonistic stance towards immigrants and labor unions. Medill controlled the *Tribune* throughout the later 19th century and continuously published the stance of the Know-Nothing movement and its doctrine that native-born Anglo-Saxons owned America

¹¹⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, November 13, 1919, p. 10.

forever. He believed that workingmen did not need to organize for their betterment. Medill considered all workers' organizations a plot by foreigners against the American way of life and a distinct threat to the nation.¹¹⁶

McCormick and Patterson believed strongly in the views of their father-in-law. Like Medill, they were rich and vocal about the superiority of Anglo-Saxons. Patterson worked as the managing editor of the *Tribune* while McCormick became its president in 1911. In order to protect their economic interests and following beliefs that had been taught them at an early age, McCormick and Patterson made the fall 1919 strikers look guilty and the business interests in the right throughout the *Tribune's* coverage.¹¹⁷

Adolph Ochs bought the *New York Times* in April 1896. Ochs came from humble beginnings and had to use bank loans and gifts from relatives to raise the money necessary to purchase controlling interest in the paper. Two decades after acquiring the paper, Ochs obtained free and clear title to the controlling stock in the paper. After nearly another decade, the *Times* finally began to prosper. These struggles and Ochs's determination to make the publication a key part of a family dynasty played a critical role in the management style of the *Times*.¹¹⁸

These early crises led Ochs to work fiercely to protect the interests of the family. Ochs believed the strikers to be a threat to the wealth that he had struggled to build. He used the *Times* cartoons and editorials to oppose all of labor's efforts. Ochs feared the IWW and the Bolsheviks' call for equal economic opportunity and openness to people from all races, classes, and sexes.¹¹⁹ He disdained the open pageants local IWW units held. Many times, violent clashes between participants and police personnel occurred following these events. This

¹¹⁶ Stephen Longstreet, *Chicago, 1860-1919* (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1973), pp. 232-233.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 239-240.

¹¹⁸ Gay Talese, *The Kingdom and the Power* (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1969), pp. 89-91.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 172-173.

confirmed to Ochs and many like him that radicalism had overtaken the city and a strong stance needed to be taken against it.¹²⁰

Ochs also worried that radical labor groups would undermine the trend New York had taken to become one of the top metropolises in the world. Historians Alex S. Jones and Susan E. Tifft maintain that during the late 19th to early 20th century, numerous projects such as the building of skyscrapers, subways, the Williamsburg and Manhattan Bridge, paved roads, and new docks helped to turn NY into a booming city.¹²¹ This prosperity led to significant wealth for the Ochs family. Ochs believed that unchecked labor uprisings could threaten all the accomplishments of the city and his newspaper. In order to protect his economic interests and check the rise of radical immigrants, Ochs had the *Times* write anti-labor, anti-immigrant articles, cartoons, editorials, and headlines. The negative stance against the labor unions by one of the nation's most prestigious newspapers probably played a critical role in the weakening of the strikers.¹²²

In 1884, Harrison Gray Otis bought the *Los Angeles Times*. Otis expressed conservative political views and rarely admitted errors. He found a person with similar personality traits in Harry Chandler, who became business and circulation manager of the paper in 1894. Otis and Chandler became obsessed with the growth of Los Angeles and saw the *Times* as a necessary tool to promote the city. In its pages, they called for the building of railroads, boasted about the numerous economic opportunities, called for people to move to the city, and worked towards creating land booms for new arrivals. Otis and Chandler saw one major obstacle standing in the way of such economic goals for themselves and the city: labor unions.¹²³

¹²⁰ Julian F. Jaffe, *Crusade Against Radicalism* (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1972), pp. 85-86.

¹²¹ Alex S. Jones and Susan E. Tifft, *The Trust* (New York: Brown and Company, 1999), pp. 59-61.

¹²² *Ibid.*, pp. 122-124.

¹²³ Marshall Berges, *The Life and Times of Los Angeles* (New York: Atheneum Press, 1984), pp. 24-25.

Otis became a leader of anti-union sentiment in thriving Los Angeles. Along with several other businessmen, he established an organization call the Merchants and Manufacturers Association under a banner of “Industrial Freedom.” The M&M, as it was called, used brutal tactics to combat unions. Along with the *Times*, it worked to convince the business community to resist the advance of the closed shop. Historian Jack R. Hart shows that Otis played a critical role in getting numerous local merchants to resist unionizing.¹²⁴

Otis’s determination to combat labor unions grew in intensity with the attack upon the building of the *Times* by eight unionists on October 1, 1910. Among them were two brothers, John J. and James B. McMamara, unafraid to make use of sabotage tactics and dynamite. The *Times* wrote in a page-one editorial: “The *Times* itself cannot be destroyed. It will be issued every day and will fight its battles to the end. They can kill our men and wreck our buildings, but, by the God above! They cannot kill the *Times*!”¹²⁵ Two days later, Otis continued his denunciation with these words: “O, you anarchic scum, you cowardly Murderers, you Leeches upon honest labor, you midnight assassins, you whose hands are dripping with the innocent blood of your victims. Look at the ruins wherein are buried the calcified remains of those whom you murdered.”¹²⁶ These words clearly illustrate the animosity that Otis displayed in relation to labor unions. Because of this attack, Otis and Chandler became even more convinced that if radical laborers could attempt to destroy a business enterprise such as the *Los Angeles Times* once, they would try so again.¹²⁷

Chandler, who assumed control of the *Times* in 1917, carried his strong bond with Otis throughout his life. Chandler continued Otis’s dreams by devoting considerable time and

¹²⁴ Jack R. Hart, *The Information Empire: The Rise of the Los Angeles Times and the Times Mirror Corporation* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1981), pp. 42-44.

¹²⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, October 2, 1910, p. 1.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, October 4, 1910, p. 1.

¹²⁷ Berges, *The Life and Times of Los Angeles*, pp. 22-23.

attention to the growth of Los Angeles and the West. Through the acquisition of wide tracts of land and oil, Chandler built a vast fortune for himself, his family, and the *Times*. Chandler's firm connection to Otis, his animosity towards labor, and his vibrant economic power led to the *Times's* mighty stance against labor throughout the 1919 fall strikes.¹²⁸

Joseph Pulitzer II, who took control of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* in 1906, became obsessed with the growth of blacks in the city during the 1910's and a perceived connection between them and the IWW. Numerous African-Americans, fed up with horrible living and working conditions along with the rise of violence against them, paid serious attention to the words of the IWW which offered equal membership to all. The call of the IWW to create a system in which the workers owned economic production proved an attraction to several African-Americans as well as numerous white writers.¹²⁹

Pulitzer II worried about maintaining the prosperity of the paper and the wealth he had inherited from his father. He made racist Oliver Bovard managing editor and gave him virtually a free hand in forming and executing news policy. Bovard wanted his newspaper to have its own personality styled after the concerns and interests of the editor. Bovard and Pulitzer believed that labor groups sought to use African-Americans to help destroy businesses throughout the country. Since St. Louis included a significant number of African-Americans and the *Post-Dispatch* was one of the most prosperous businesses in the region, Pulitzer and Bovard regarded the IWW and the Bolsheviks as a direct threat to their business, economic, and personal interests. Since both believed that a large presence of the IWW and Bolsheviks existed in the 1919 fall strikes, the *Post-Dispatch* harshly attacked labor's efforts during this period. Pulitzer and Bovard's concern

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.

¹²⁹ Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, pp. 209-211.

about race led to numerous articles that harped on the IWW, Bolshevism, and African-American presence in these strikes.¹³⁰

Ned McLean ran the *Washington Post* from 1916-1933. As Pulitzer II, he inherited his paper and a vast supply of wealth from his father. McLean's extreme conservative beliefs, wealth, dislike of African-Americans, and distrust of labor unions played a significant role in his reactionary response to the 1919 fall strikes.¹³¹

In June, a bomb exploded at the house of the new attorney general, A. Mitchell Palmer, and convinced McLean that "Bolsheviks" were about to destroy the American economic and social order. He believed that radicalism could influence Washington's working classes, at the bottom of which stood the city's black masses. Throughout the summer and into the fall, the *Post* wrote incendiary stories which focused on the violence committed by African-Americans and a connection to Bolshevism, despite having not direct evidence to prove such claims.¹³²

The *Post's* response to the bombing of Palmer's house illustrated its stance during the 1919 fall strikes. The *Post* hammered away at the "red assassins" Palmer pursued and declared, "there is treason of the tongue as well as the head." Washington, the *Post* felt, was unsurpassed in "its Americanism" because of the nature of its population: "Some cities we could mention are more conspicuous for numbers than for quality. As for Washington it does not suffer from the indigestibility of foreign masses."¹³³

McLean believed that the *Post* performed a critical role in proclaiming the Americanism of Washington throughout the 1919 fall strikes. He worried about the influence of the IWW and

¹³⁰ Daniel W. Pfaff, *Joseph Pulitzer II and the Post-Dispatch: A Newspaperman's Life* (University Park: Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), pp. 209-211.

¹³¹ Chalmers M. Roberts, *The Washington Post: The First 100 Years* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1977), pp. 134-135.

¹³² Constance M. Green, *Washington: Capital City, 1879-1950* (Princeton: New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 261-263.

¹³³ *The Washington Post*, June 3, 1919, p. 1.

the Bolsheviks on the lower classes, especially African-Americans. He blamed the IWW and the Bolsheviks for labor uprisings during this period and watched for their presence among African-Americans. Therefore, seeing the *Post's* harping on the threat of the labor strikes upon the American way of life and African-American presence in these upheavals should have come as no surprise.¹³⁴

In 1868, Colonel Cary W. Styles founded the *Atlanta Constitution*, later to become the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. A year later, G.H. Anderson and Anderson's son-in-law, William A. Hemphill, succeeded him. Anderson retired in 1880, leaving Hemphill as business manager and part owner. Henry W. Grady joined the staff of the *Constitution* in 1876, purchased an interest in the paper and became its managing editor in 1880. Hemphill and Grady believed in the molding of a New South, patterned after Northern industrialism and led by the section's conservative white Democrats. Hemphill's and Grady's vision of a New South had no role for strong labor unions or a visible presence of African-American population.¹³⁵

In 1900, a new company formed with Evan P. Howell and Roby Robinson bought the Hemphill stock. Howell and Robinson followed the beliefs of Hemphill and Grady who died in 1889. Both worked toward the continued shaping of the New South and suppressing the organized labor presence in the region. Howell and Robinson believed that radical groups like the IWW and the Bolsheviks could destroy their visions. So the *Journal-Constitution* continuously assaulted the IWW during the 1910's and the Bolsheviks during the outbreak of the Russian Civil War in 1918. Howell and Robinson's desire to protect the New South, along with

¹³⁴ Roberts, *The Washington Post*, pp. 155-156.

¹³⁵ Louis T. Griffith and John E. Talmadge, *Georgia Journalism, 1763-1950* (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1951), pp. 97-99.

worry over protecting their own economic interests, led to the *Journal-Constitution's* harsh attacks upon the 1919 fall strikes.¹³⁶

In 1868 Colonel James H. Estill gained control of the *Savannah Morning News* and led the *News* to significant prosperity in the years following. Like those running the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Estill wanted to make a New South that would arise from the ruins of the Civil War and Reconstruction. Estill desired for the South to build industries and become a flourishing economic region. Much like the owners of the *Journal-Constitution*, Estill believed that powerful labor unions would hinder the growth of the South. Estill maintained that labor uprisings would upset the social fabric of the South in which African-Americans played an inferior role. Bringing race into his criticisms allowed Estill to illustrate to his reader the danger labor unions posed to the makeup of the South.¹³⁷

Estill played a key role in the selection of his successor, Frank G. Bell, who expressed the same opinions that he did. Bell believed in maintaining the social order of the South and saw segregation as a key facet. Bell desired to help industries prosper with strong individual control and the dismantling of a strong labor union presence. Bell ran the *Morning News* from 1907-1926, and the paper continued the policies begun by Estill. Bell espoused the same goals as Estill in attacking the 1919 fall strikes: maintain the growth of the *Morning News*, secure his wealth, and protect the slow but steady growth of region. Bell, like many mainstream Americans, feared the IWW and Bolshevik presence in the 1919 fall strikes and believed that only a vigorous response could stop the radical threat.¹³⁸

Daniel D. Moore became editor of the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* in 1911. Moore expressed concern over the growing number of African-Americans in the region and their

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 143-144, 339-340.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 398-400.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 399-400.

potential connection to radicalism. Geographer Pierce Lewis shows that African-Americans lived in atrociously segregated neighborhoods in no hope of economic advancement. As the number of African-Americans increased in the early 20th century, so did their sufferings. Due to their poor living conditions and economic struggles, numerous African-Americans in the city paid attention to radical labor unions and their call for taking over the means of production.¹³⁹

Moore sought to make the *Picayune* a tool to combat the rise of radicalism. He harshly criticized the fall 1919 strikers and the connection to race in order to appease elites in the city. The presence of the IWW and the Bolsheviks likely led to panic in the minds of mainstream Americans because the threat seemed like it could hit anywhere. The *Times-Picayune* undoubtedly took a comparable approach to the 1919 fall strikes as the other racially based papers for much the same reasons.¹⁴⁰

Wealthy, conservative, native-born Anglo-Saxons controlled the words of the mainstream press. These people became obsessed with the accumulation of money and the perceived threat “outsiders” posed to their power. During this period, large numbers of immigrants from “undesirable” countries and African-Americans flocked to these cities. In this time of Bolshevik and IWW rhetoric, the owners and editors of these papers saw them as a necessary defense against unwelcome change in the American economic, political, and social order.

¹³⁹ Pierce F. Lewis, *New Orleans: The Making of an Urban Landscape* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1976), pp. 43-44.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

CHAPTER 4

FIRST RED SCARE STRIKES: THE RESPONSE OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN PERIODICALS

From the late 19th to early 20th century, the cities studied experienced an increase in their African-American population, some rather significant. This change in population and the migration of African-Americans to various parts of the country had an enormous impact on the response of African-American periodicals to the 1919 fall strikes and the level of influence the federal government and mainstream Americans had on this reaction.

In 1890, the national census showed that the cities examined had a wide range of African-American population. Los Angeles had a total African-American population of 3,190, 6.3% of its overall populace; Atlanta had 28,117 African-Americans, 42.9% of its total population; Savannah, 22,978, 53%; Chicago, 14,852, 1.3%; Washington, 75,697, 33%; New Orleans, 64,663, 26.7%; St. Louis, 27,066, 6%; and New York City, 15,674, 1%.¹⁴¹

In 1920, the national census illustrated that increases in African-American population occurred in each city, some rather significant. Los Angeles now had 15,579 African-Americans; Atlanta, 67,796; Savannah, 39,179; Chicago, 109,458; Washington, 109,966; New Orleans, 100,930; St. Louis, 69,854; and New York City had 152,467. New York and Chicago had the most profound increases: New York at 136,793 and Chicago at an equally staggering 94,606.

¹⁴¹ Department of the Interior: *Report on the Population of the United States at the 11th Census, 1890* (Washington, D.C.; Government Printing Office, 1895), pp. 451-485.

But this increase in total populace did not come with increase in percentage of overall population for all. All the Northern and Midwestern cities witnessed an increase in percentage. Chicago's African-American populace percentage went from 1.3% to 2.7%; New York's changed from 1% to 2.7%. St. Louis's increased from 6% to 9%, giving it the largest upward change in percentage of total population. All the Southern cities had decreases in their percentages; Atlanta's African-American populace now made up 33.5%, Savannah, 51.5%; Washington, D.C., 25.1%; New Orleans, 26%. Los Angeles also saw a decrease in percentage with a 2.7%.¹⁴²

All of these statistics illustrate the impact World War I had upon African-Americans with its encouragement of movement to fill jobs left by soldiers. African-Americans also left due to a profound distaste for the segregated South. Historian Mark Ellis claims that in 1915 and 1916, the rural South had to deal with floods and boll-weevil infestations that severely damaged the earning possibilities for thousands of African-American farmers. These events, along with the constant threat of violence from white southerners, encouraged African-Americans to move elsewhere.¹⁴³

Ellis maintains that movements took place in large numbers from rural areas to cities in the South and even bigger amounts to northern cities. From 1910 to 1920, 235,000 blacks moved from rustic locations to urban areas in the South Atlantic states. Between 400,000 and 500,000 African-Americans moved to the North.¹⁴⁴ Their arrival put a significant amount of stress on the cities that saw this increase and those who lost population. Southern industries struggled mightily with these changes. Many Southern whites worried about the effects and called for efforts to persuade African-Americans to stay. In the North and Midwest, cities such

¹⁴² Department of Commerce: *Report on the Population of the U.S. at the 14th Census, 1920* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1922), pp. 118, 181, 222, 274, 405, 569, and 710.

¹⁴³ Ellis, *Race, War, and Surveillance*, pp. 18-19.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

as New York, Chicago, and St. Louis dealt with negative responses of native whites that often turned into riots. The WWI and post-war period experienced many bloody encounters between white laborers concerned about keeping their jobs and black workers hired at cheaper rates to take their place.¹⁴⁵

One prominent example occurred in St. Louis in 1917. The influx of blacks into the city led to calls for stronger segregation ordinances by white communities which lived near African-Americans. These communities organized the United Welfare Association (UWA) and circulated an initiative petition in 1915 to enact an ordinance to prevent ill feeling, conflict, and collision between the white and black races by requiring the use of separate blocks for residence and mandating segregation in churches and dance halls. This petition succeeded in getting a segregation law passed and led to the growing frustration of the city's black population.¹⁴⁶

The St. Louis and eastern capitalists who owned the industrial base paid its labor seventeen to twenty cents per hour. Because of this, workers at the Aluminum Ore Company went on strike and stayed out for several weeks during the summer. The plant decided to bring in cheaper black laborers. Those on strike attacked the black workers in a violent riot that led to one hundred and eight blacks being killed. Police and National Guardsmen did nothing to stop the attacks; they participated in it with the clubbing of black employees.¹⁴⁷

The events leading to the St. Louis riot were repeated countless times during this period. The summer of 1919 saw several violent race riots in such places as Washington and Chicago. Mainstream America placed the blame for these riots solely upon African-Americans. Ned McLean's *Washington Post* wrote: "TWO WOMEN ATTACKED-POLICE HOLD FOUR NEGROES AS SUSPECTS IN OUTRAGE." In it, he described how "ravenous Negroes" had

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

¹⁴⁶ Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, pp. 412-413.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 414-415.

“hunted down” these women. From there, he talked about how more than 100 blacks had been “arrested or examined” by police.¹⁴⁸

On July 19, McLean published a one-column headline, which read: “ATTACKS ON WOMEN LEAD TO RACE RIOTS.” The lead story followed: “Aggravation of District citizens and soldiery in Washington at the recent attacks on women by Negroes led to race riots last night when more than 400 men of mixed civilian and military dress, armed with revolvers and clubs, marched into the southwest section of the city on an avowed mission of terrorism.”¹⁴⁹ McLean said nothing about the attacks of soldiers and civilians upon blacks. This occurred throughout the Washington riots. McLean wrote to make it appear that only African-Americans were responsible for the violence.

Along with vicious conflicts, African-Americans dealt with large-scale lynching throughout the South and the segregation of black soldiers. Many of the conflicts and lynchings took place because of negative white American response to the sight of African-Americans in uniform. William Jordan writes of one incident where a decorated black soldier named James C. Ellis had befriended many white soldiers in military hospitals and on the trip home from France. Upon boarding a local ferry in Cleveland, a white southerner tried to stop him from going on and joining his friends. The man told Ellis, “‘niggers’ had to go upstairs.” This led to a confrontation between the two and would have turned deadly if not for the intervention of Ellis’s friends.¹⁵⁰

One might expect those running African-American periodicals to take a consensus stance against the existing law-and-order. African-Americans dealing with economic struggles, severe violence against them, the ingratitude of many white Americans for their war services, and a government that did little to alleviate the problems might be inclined to listen to the Bolsheviks

¹⁴⁸ *Washington Post*, July 1, 1919, p. 1.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, July 19, 1919, p. 1.

¹⁵⁰ William Jordan, *Black Newspapers and America’s War for Democracy*, p. 146.

and the IWW which called for equal participation in a “just” economy. Black periodicals might have called for the support of the Bolshevik revolution, the IWW, and massive changes in the existing economic, political, and social order. The fall 1919 strikes provided the best opportunity for such upheaval to occur. But a universal reaction supporting the fall 1919 strikes did not take place. In fact, the black periodicals expressed many varying opinions and some even attacked others. This chapter examines their statements and the reasons behind difference of expression.

Why did such a distinct difference in opinion exist among African-American periodicals in relation to the fall 1919 strikes while a universal outcry among mainstream newspapers occurred? This thesis argues that past experiences of the editors, a divergence in belief on how African-Americans should respond to World War I, and an intense fear of government and business elite retribution led to the lack of consensus sentiment.

W.E.B. Du Bois had many childhood experiences where others made him feel like an outsider because of his skin color. This made Du Bois determined to do something to help the development of his race. His college experience at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee only escalated this attitude. The segregated system of the South led Du Bois to believe that the goals of his race were being undermined by racial bias. This led Du Bois to begin focusing on the themes of black nationalism and African-American heritage. Throughout the late 19th and early 20th century, Du Bois took what many deemed radical stances on issues of civil rights, segregation, and the right to vote.¹⁵¹

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Du Bois became engaged in an intense debate with Tuskegee Institute founder Booker T. Washington over the direction African-Americans

¹⁵¹ Elliot M. Rudwick: *W.E.B. Du Bois: A Study in Minority Group Leadership* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960), pp. 19-21.

needed to take in American society. Books such as Robert L. Factor's *The Black Response to America*, Jacqueline M. Moore's *Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and the Struggle for Racial Uplift*, and Thomas E. Harris's *Analysis of the Clash over the Issues between Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois* describe Washington's policies as "conciliatory" to mainstream America, especially the South. Washington called for African-Americans to remain in the South and reject labor unions and strikes. Washington desired for African-Americans to embrace industrial education which would give them skills in such fields as agriculture, mechanics, and industry. In doing so, African-Americans would gain economic opportunities which would enable them to move up the social ladder. Washington urged African-Americans to be "patient" in relation to social and political issues. Instead of speaking out against such problems as segregation, African-Americans should work with the system. Once African-Americans proved their loyalty and essential skills, mainstream Southerners would make concessions.¹⁵²

Historians such as Factor, Harris, and Cary Wintz in his *African-American Political Thought, 1890-1930* portray Du Bois as a militant because of his "antagonistic" stance against mainstream America at the beginning of the 20th century. Du Bois called for African-Americans to migrate to Northern cities. He urged African-Americans to support labor unions and strikes because doing so would bring economic advancement. He implored African-Americans to speak out against lynching, segregation, disenfranchisement, and lack of educational opportunity. African-Americans had to insist upon "immediate" change in their economic, political, and social status to improve their situation. They could not afford to be "patient" because mainstream

¹⁵² Thomas E. Harris, *Analysis of the Clash over the Issues between Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1993), pp. 48-49, Robert L. Factor, *The Black Response to America* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1970), pp. 170-171, and Jacqueline M. Moore, *Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and the Struggle for Racial Uplift* (Wilmington, Delaware: SR Books, 2003), pp. 32-33.

America, especially in the South, would never give African-Americans anything.¹⁵³

The dispute between “accommodationists” led by Washington and “militants” led by Du Bois reached a critical heating point in 1904 with the release of Du Bois’s essay “The Parting of the Ways.” In it, Du Bois criticized Washington and his “conservative” policies for failing to alleviate the problems that African-Americans faced. Du Bois focused on the “horrid” economic status of African-Americans in the South, the strengthening of segregation after the 1896 Supreme Court Plessy vs. Ferguson decision upholding segregation as long as it was “separate but equal,” and the increasing incidents of lynching. Du Bois urged his readers to move in a radical direction and stand behind socialist, even Marxist movements. He insisted that confrontations with mainstream Americans needed to occur. This made for a clear break away from efforts to bring conciliation between “accommodationists” and “militants.” Following this, Du Bois organized his Niagara Movement in 1905.¹⁵⁴

Du Bois and his Niagara Movement provide an excellent illustration of his early radical tendencies. This event led to Du Bois to call for such changes as the freedom of speech and criticism, manhood suffrage, the unfettered and unsubsidized press, the abolition of all caste distinctions based simply on race and color, and the recognition of the principles of human brotherhood as a practical present creed. This led to the establishment of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the *Crisis*.¹⁵⁵ Much of this was quite similar to the rhetoric later expressed by the Bolsheviks and the IWW. What led to the change in Du Bois where he sharply criticized the radical makeup of such organizations?

¹⁵³ Harris, *Analysis of the Clash over the Issues between Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois*, pp. 45-47, Factor, *The Black Response to America*, pp. 258-260, and Cary D. Wintz, *African-American Political Thought: 1890-1930* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe Publishing, 1996), pp. 6-7.

¹⁵⁴ Wintz, *African-American Political Thought*, pp. 95-98.

¹⁵⁵ Rudwick, *W.E.B. Du Bois: A Study in Minority Group Leadership*, pp. 95-96.

The creation of the *Crisis* and the rise of World War I led Du Bois to move away from a consistently radical stance. The NAACP's executive board consisted of Oswald Garrison Villard, Joel E. Spingarn, and Mary White Ovington who were all white and insistent that the words of the organization and its journal be moderate in tone. This board chose Du Bois to be the editor of the *Crisis* because they believed that he would be more open to pacifying whites than other black journalists, such as William Monroe Trotter and Ida B. Wells, who took militant stances. To become editor, Du Bois agreed to avoid criticisms of the national government and "to avoid personal rancor of all sorts." The board constantly reminded Du Bois of the white audience that he wrote for.¹⁵⁶

The Wilson administration's moving of the country towards World War I led to it taking a scrutinizing eye to everyone outside of mainstream America. It made Du Bois a primary focus after he condemned the war as a "capitalist conspiracy." The government put pressure on Du Bois to moderate the *Crisis* by threatening military censorship if he did not and keeping a detailed file of *Crisis* editorials dating back to 1916. The War Department used any critical remarks made by Du Bois as grounds to step up the intensity of investigation. As well, the Wilson administration encouraged Spingarn to offer Du Bois an appointment to work with him in the army intelligence service in the rank of captain. Du Bois believed that if he served in this capacity, he could work within the government to help bring changes which would improve conditions for African-Americans.¹⁵⁷

Du Bois responded to governmental scrutiny and rewards by writing the editorial "Close Ranks" in the July 1918 *Crisis*. In it, Du Bois urged African-Americans to stand behind the government and "close our ranks shoulder to shoulder with our white fellow citizens and the

¹⁵⁶ William Jordan, *Black Newspapers and America's War For Democracy*, pp. 28-29.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 113-114.

allied nations that are fighting for democracy.” He insisted that the Germans and their cause posed destruction to the “aspirations of Negroes and all darker races for equality, freedom, and democracy.”¹⁵⁸

The Wilson administration continued their scrutiny of Du Bois and the *Crisis* after the war. With the rise of the Bolshevik revolution and the continued threat of the IWW, the national government kept intact the threat of censorship, collection of *Crisis* editorials, and urging of the NAACP executive board to keep Du Bois in place. All of this, along with Du Bois’s belief that African-Americans would improve civil rights by working with mainstream America, led him to take a pro-government, pro-business perspective throughout the First Red Scare.¹⁵⁹

Asa Philip Randolph grew up in a faith-going home under the watchful eye of his father, Reverend James Randolph, who stressed the reading of the Bible while also telling his son that black people made up most of the great men of the country. His father’s influence led Asa to develop an early pride in his race. Asa grew up in Jacksonville during the Jim Crow era. He carried the memories of a segregated society with him everywhere he went. As he grew older, Randolph let go of his religious upbringing and became a passionate follower of the teachings of Du Bois. Randolph believed strongly in the ideas expressed by Du Bois about the Talented Tenth. This led Randolph towards pursuing a career in politics, which he believed, would be more favorable up North. This led to his move to New York and the introduction to Chandler Owen.¹⁶⁰

Owen believed as Randolph did in the promotion of the race and the defense of all its interests. Owen moved up to New York to attend Columbia, and his academic interests in

¹⁵⁸ *Crisis*, July 1918, p. 111.

¹⁵⁹ Theodore Kornweibel, Jr. “*Investigate Everything*”: *Federal Efforts to Compel Black Loyalty During World War I* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2002), pp. 147-148.

¹⁶⁰ Jervis Anderson, *A. Philip Randolph* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1972), pp. 25, 39, and 51-52.

sociology and political science meshed well with Randolph's. Owen and Randolph became intrigued by the policies of the IWW and attended several IWW parades and functions. This played a critical role in their decision to form the *Messenger* in 1917. They started the magazine in response to the "steady and numerous requests of their 'intelligent, radical, forward-looking, and clear-eyed patrons.'" Randolph and Owen believed that mainstream Americans, through government and big business, subjected blacks to a vastly inferior position. African-Americans needed to push for drastic change, or conditions would only get worse.¹⁶¹

From the start, the *Messenger* attacked the black leaders who Randolph and Owen believed did not express enough concern about the condition of African-Americans and were too dependent on rich white people. They insisted that Du Bois headed this list as Randolph expressed disappointment at one of his former heroes giving into the rhetoric of the "white capitalists" and the government. Randolph and Owen believed that the government and business elites brought about the war to support their interests. Therefore, African-Americans should have stood against it. While Du Bois also expressed the opinion that the government and big business joined the war to "line up their pockets," he also maintained that African-Americans would best be able to bring racial improvement by working together with mainstream America. This led him to move in a moderate direction. Randolph and Owen insisted that racial improvement could only come by standing against mainstream America. They expressed this opinion throughout the war.¹⁶²

Randolph and Owen's harsh criticisms, in which they called for blacks to reject the war and support the Bolshevik Revolution and the IWW, met with a sharp response from the Wilson administration. The United States Justice Department arrested Randolph and Owen on August 4,

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp 76, 81-82.

¹⁶² Paula F. Pfeffer, A. *Philip Randolph: Pioneer of the Civil Rights Movement* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), p. 8.

1918 for comments in the *Messenger* that encouraged blacks to resist conscription and fight at home to change the economic and social order. Randolph and Owen spent two days in jail before a judge threw the case out. After obtaining their release, Randolph and Owen received notification from Postmaster General Albert Burleson that the *Messenger* had been denied second-class mailing privileges. Despite such scrutiny, Randolph and Owen did not back away from their condemnation of the war effort.¹⁶³

Federal and state government continued to put pressure on Randolph and Owen as the war drew to a close and the First Red Scare began. In the summer of 1919, the New York legislature created the Lusk Committee, which was headed by State Senator Clayton Lusk. The Lusk Committee sought to investigate radicalism and sedition in the state and made the *Messenger* its prime target. It insisted that the *Messenger* had developed a well-organized movement to link blacks with radicals, even though it had no credible evidence that such a movement actually existed. The Lusk Committee sought to wipe out this perceived radicalism among blacks and to put the *Messenger* out of business.¹⁶⁴

Along with jail threats, the closing of the mail service to the *Messenger*, and the state government's obsession with getting the publication shut down, Randolph and Owen faced scrutiny by the Justice Department Bureau of Investigation. Throughout 1919, the Bureau monitored their speeches and examined the *Messenger*. Robert A. Bowen, director of the Justice Department's Bureau of Translation and Radical Publications in New York, incriminated the *Messenger* of "inciting Negroes towards disloyalty." Bowen found the *Messenger's* promotion of the IWW and the Bolsheviks the most distasteful.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ Anderson, A. *Philip Randolph*, pp. 108-109.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 116-117.

¹⁶⁵ Regin Schmidt, *Red Scare: FBI and the Origins of Anticommunism in the United States, 1919-1943* (Copenhagen, Denmark: University of Copenhagen Press, 2000), pp. 181-183.

The *Messenger* also became the focus of Representative James F. Byrnes of South Carolina during the late summer of 1919. Byrnes claimed that the *Messenger* sought the destruction of the American way of life and had “planned a campaign of violence against the United States.” He insisted that the *Messenger* worked hand-in-hand with the IWW and called for the government to keep the black press under surveillance. The Justice Department agreed with Byrnes’s assertions as they attested that radical papers “were springing up all over the country.”¹⁶⁶

Throughout all of this, Randolph and Owen did not give in. They insisted that African-Americans would only get racial improvement through drastic change. This led them to criticize the American economic and social order throughout the First Red Scare and urge blacks to unite with the IWW and the Bolsheviks. Randolph and Owen believed that they would impair the goals of their “radical followers” if they submitted to mainstream America.¹⁶⁷

James Weldon Johnson had a very similar upbringing to Randolph. He grew up in segregated Jacksonville and carried the images of a bigoted society. His father, while a headwaiter, led a spiritual home which also emphasized constant reading of the Bible. Like Randolph, Johnson moved away from his religious upbringing towards a political direction after study at Atlanta University. During his years at Atlanta University, Johnson met Du Bois who was a professor there. Similar to Randolph, Johnson became a passionate follower of Du Bois and his teachings. This influenced Johnson to move to New York in 1914. Johnson believed that little opportunity for advancement existed for blacks in the South. Shortly after moving to New York, Johnson became the editor of the *New York Age*.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

¹⁶⁷ Pfeffer, A. *Philip Randolph, Pioneer of the Civil Rights Movement*, pp. 18-19.

¹⁶⁸ Eugene Levy, *James Weldon Johnson* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), pp. 6, 18-19, 104, and 153-154.

Beginning in 1907 when Booker T. Washington supporter Fred Moore took over the paper, the *Age* expressed opinion favorable towards Washington and his goals. This led Washington to financially support the paper and maintain profound influence over its direction. The *Age* urged African-Americans to work with mainstream American and to avoid a radical direction. It harshly criticized African-American leaders such as Du Bois for his fallout with Washington.

Upon taking over as editor, Johnson wrote very scathing editorials against the government and big business for their subjugation of the black race. He urged African-Americans to insist upon equal rights and emphasized black pride. This led many mainstream Americans to see him and the *Age* as radical. Moore responded by urging Johnson to curb the tone of his writings, and Johnson acquiesced.¹⁶⁹

Despite Johnson taking a more moderate tone, the Wilson administration kept a close eye on the *Age* upon U.S. entrance into the war. The U.S. Justice Department called the *Age* an “uncontrollably bitter” publication. The Justice Department stated this in response to an editorial Johnson wrote which urged the federal government to act against lynching. The federal government insisted that any criticism made against lynching, segregation, and the inferior economic and social status of African-Americans made the speaker “disloyal.” The Justice Department began efforts to suppress the paper by threatening the loss of mailing services.¹⁷⁰

Johnson reacted to the federal government’s pressure by writing pro-war, pro-government editorials throughout late 1917 and 1918. He did not deal with such issues as lynching and segregation and instead urged blacks to support the war effort and enlist en masse.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 151-152.

¹⁷⁰ Jordan, *Black Newspapers and America’s War For Democracy, 1914-1920*, pp. 116-117.

Like Moore, Johnson believed that taking such a stance would provide future opportunity for African-Americans and ensure the preservation of the paper.¹⁷¹

Johnson continued his pro-mainstream America editorials during the First Red Scare. They emphasized the patriotism of black Americans and their repulsion towards radicalism. He urged blacks to reject the IWW, the Bolsheviks, and the strike fervor. He harshly criticized periodicals like the *Messenger* which supported the fall 1919 strikes. By doing so, Johnson maintained the paper's conservative writing style that began under Moore and Washington.¹⁷²

Robert Abbott created the *Chicago Defender* in 1905 to speak out against the prejudice that he witnessed firsthand as a youth growing up in Chicago. He believed Chicago would serve as a key center for such a mission because of its large black population. The *Defender* emphasized the black causes against lynching, segregation, and disenfranchisement. Abbott's editorials focused on the South and spoke out against the racial inequality and oppression that existed in the region. Abbott urged African-Americans to migrate North because of its greater racial justice and economic opportunity.¹⁷³

Abbott urged blacks to join the war effort, but also to insist upon racial equity. Like Johnson during the early stages of U.S. participation in the war, he did not move away from pre-war sentiments. Because the *Defender* reached so many southern blacks, this made many southern whites determined to silence the publication. Many mainstream Southerners, which included the editors of such southern papers as the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, called for the federal government to crack down on Abbott and subdue the *Defender*. The Justice Department agreed with these contentions and began surveillance of the publication.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 159-160.

¹⁷² Levy, *James Weldon Johnson*, pp. 190-192.

¹⁷³ Roland E. Wolseley, *The Black Press, U.S.A.* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1971.), pp. 52-53.

¹⁷⁴ Kornweibel, *Investigate Everything*, pp. 119-120.

Investigators in the Bureau Chicago field office called Abbott in several times during the war and made it clear to him that severe consequences would ensue if he continued with his writings. Bureau agent J.E. Hawkins insisted that the government would use the Espionage and Sedition Act against the *Defender*. Throughout 1917, the Bureau kept a careful watch on the publication. The following year, the U.S. Post Office Department and the Military Intelligence Branch began their own investigation of Abbott. Officials such as Walter H. Loving, the head investigator of black publications during the war, made visits to Abbott's office and made threats about possible jail time, shutting down the paper, and taking away mailing services. While all of this went on, mainstream Southerners continued their attacks against the *Defender*. All claimed that Abbott sought to incite blacks to riot against white authority figures.¹⁷⁵

Abbott did not back away from his push for racial justice during the course of the war, but he did change course in the years following. The Justice Department, the U.S. Postal Office Department, and the Military Intelligence Branch continued the use of threats and visits throughout the First Red Scare. The governmental scrutiny led Abbott to realize that more good could come to African-Americans by working with mainstream Americans than against it. This led Abbott to condemn the fall 1919 strikes, to urge African-Americans to shy away from any form of violence, and ignore such issues as lynching and segregation. By doing so, Abbott moved away from the language that had stirred up so many mainstream Southerners during the war.¹⁷⁶

Ben Davis, like other black journalists, expressed strong criticism of lynching and segregation before the entry in World War I. His *Atlanta Independent* chastised mainstream Southerners for keeping blacks from being educated and away from the voting booth. Davis

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 126-128.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 129-130.

worked as a teacher during the time he ran the *Independent* and had made a fortune through several business enterprises. He urged his readers to follow the same course. This brought the same mainstream American response as that directed towards Abbott.¹⁷⁷

The same agencies that focused on Abbott also investigated Davis. They told Davis that they saw the *Independent* as one of the leading radical periodicals and threatened the same consequences with it as the *Defender*. Davis faced such scrutiny despite largely following the conservative beliefs of Washington. The Wilson administration placed Davis on its focus list because of his condemnation of lynching and segregation. Davis responded by reproving radical periodicals, such as the *Messenger* for telling African-Americans to resist the war effort and overthrow the current system of order. The *Independent* dropped calls for the national government to eliminate lynching and segregation and became one of the biggest proponents of Wilson's war direction.¹⁷⁸

Davis continued writing editorials which were favorable to mainstream America during the fall 1919 strikes. The *Independent* strongly criticized black publications as the *Messenger* and the *Crusader* which supported the strikes and called for dramatic change in the economic and social order. Davis insisted that African-Americans rejected radicalism and supported their government in its fight against it. This made him a frequent target of the radical black publications. Before the war, Davis would have been counted as one of them by the Wilson administration. The government and big business' effort to strike down anything that threatened the current economic and social order had a dramatic impact upon the thinking and language of Davis.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ Gerald Horne, *Black Liberation/Red Scare, Ben Davis Jr. and the Communist Party* (Newark, Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 1994), pp. 19-20.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

¹⁷⁹ Schmidt, *Red Scare*, pp. 184-186.

Cyril V. Briggs created the *Crusader* during the war period and made it one of the leading radical periodicals of the time. He insisted that dramatic national upheaval needed to occur for blacks to assume a favorable position in society. Briggs saw the *Crusader* as a key component of “revolutionary nationalism.” This made him good friends with Randolph and Owen and an intense enemy of the national government. Briggs did not hesitate to criticize the Wilson administration and scoffed at it urging blacks to support the war effort. Briggs insisted that African-Americans needed to focus on the many ills at home and claimed that if African-Americans supported mainstream America during the war, their position in society would diminish even more afterwards. Like Randolph and Owen, Briggs harshly chastised leading black journalists like Du Bois and Davis who urged blacks to come together in support of the war.¹⁸⁰

The federal government responded by calling the *Crusader*, along with the *Messenger*, the leading “reactionary periodicals of the era.” The Justice Department kept close surveillance on Briggs and his journal throughout the war. It worked hand-in-hand with the Post Office Department in threatening Briggs with harsh consequences if he did not desist. Similar to Randolph and Owen, Briggs did not comply; he became even more combative. Briggs believed that arrest, surveillance, and threats to shut down his paper were worth the risk to better the position of African-Americans, which could only come through radical means. This led the Justice Department in the summer of 1919 to investigate Brigg’s connection to Bolshevism and the claims of mainstream Southerners that the *Crusader* had incited race riots in the region. The *Crusader*, like the *Messenger*, became a focal point of the Lusk committee and Senator Byrnes. Despite this, Briggs did not back away from his war period language. He continued to support

¹⁸⁰ Ellis, *Race, War, and Surveillance*, pp.105-106.

the IWW and the Bolsheviks and urged blacks to join them. He vocally supported the strikers and called for a universal labor front.¹⁸¹

African-American editors such as Du Bois, Briggs, Randolph, Owen, Johnson, and Abbott continued their debate on how African-Americans should respond to mainstream America's call for help during a critical national period. The crisis shifted from World War I to the First Red Scare. The reaction of these important figures illustrates a key component of the dispute between militant and accommodationist stances in black politics.

The *Messenger* maintained a strong support of the IWW and the Bolsheviks before the strikes and escalated its defense of those organizations during the strikes. In July 1919, the *Messenger* wrote an editorial titled "Why Negroes Should Join the IWW." It contended that African-Americans should join the IWW because it was the only labor organization in the United States that encouraged African-Americans to join. It scoffed at such organizations as the AFL which limited its enrollment to skilled workers and fought against black Americans. By joining the IWW, African-Americans, it insisted, would truly have "political power." The national government could not ignore black Americans if they participated in an organization that called and fought for change.¹⁸²

In August 1919, the *Messenger* took the *Crisis* and its editor W.E.B. Du Bois to task for attacks Du Bois made against the IWW. In an editorial entitled "The Crisis of the Crisis," it affirmed that Du Bois had stated in his April *Crisis* that "Suppose we had yielded to German propaganda, suppose we had refused to should arms, or had wrought mischief and confusion, patterning ourselves after the IWW and the pro-Germans of this country. How should we hold

¹⁸¹ Schmidt, *Red Scare*, pp. 201-202.

¹⁸² *Messenger*, July 1919, p. 8.

up our heads?”¹⁸³ It insisted that Du Bois should take a stance for the IWW because it did not “discriminate” against African-Americans, as African-Americans had gotten “absolutely nothing” out of any support they had given the war cause. To the *Messenger*, Du Bois’s words proved he had become a “lackey of the government.”¹⁸⁴ The *Messenger*’s criticism illustrates one of the prominent conflicts between African-American periodicals during the post-war period.

The *Crusader* echoed the words of the *Messenger* with an editorial, “The Lusk Committee Makes a Discovery.” The editorial mocked the government and its “fact-finding mission” which determined that blacks were moving towards radicalism and affiliation with the IWW and Bolsheviks. The *Crusader* maintained: “Of course, the Negro would do such a thing. What else could be expected in a country that denies that the Negro is human and deprives him of liberty and happiness?” It urged all African-Americans to join such radical groups.¹⁸⁵ Neither the *Crusader* nor the Lusk Committee provided any direct evidence that blacks were indeed joining radical groups in significant numbers.

The *Messenger* responded to the Boston police strike with an editorial titled “Strikes.” It called for “all strikes, all the time.” A strike, it insisted, was the best tool for employees to use against business interests. Strikes stopped production which halted “profits.” Without “profits,” businesses could not survive. Therefore, big businesses reacted “terror-stricken.” The *Messenger* affirmed its support for the strikers and maintained that the city administration’s reaction proved that strikes were the best response to “business elite injustice.”¹⁸⁶

This edition of the *Messenger* contained a companion editorial entitled “The March of Industrial Unionism.” It called for the formation of “One Big Union” where every worker was

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, August 1919, p. 10.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ *Crusader*, August 1919, p. 6.

¹⁸⁶ *Messenger*, September 1919, p. 5-6.

welcome and which responded properly to “capitalism’s gigantic combination of trusts, cartels, and financial syndicates.” In creating “One Big Union,” industrial unionism would enable all employees to strike and “knock out big business and big government.” The editorial closed with these words in big print: “ON WITH THE ONE BIG UNION! ON WITH INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM! ON WITH THE EMANCIPATION OF THE WORKERS OF THE WORLD!”¹⁸⁷

The *Crisis* responded to the Boston police strike and words of the *Messenger* and the *Crusader* with an editorial called “Let Us Reason Together.” It insisted that African-Americans had given much during the last few years. African-Americans had supported the war effort and given much-needed labor at home. Consequently, they should no longer have to look the other way when “the murderer” comes. It maintained that African-Americans should be prepared to defend themselves and meet any attack with similar response. At the same time, Du Bois called for his readers to reject trying to “seek reform by violence.” He deplored the words and actions of radical groups like the IWW and Bolsheviks who called for change “by any means necessary.” He expressed criticism of the strikers for the violence they had brought to the city of Boston. He implored his readers “not to follow such methods.”¹⁸⁸

In response to labor unions, the *Crisis* wrote an editorial, “The Negro and The Labor Union.” Du Bois maintained that the war had opened the labor force to African-Americans. He insisted: “Many Negroes had moved up the rungs of the labor ladder and were competing with the white man in well-paid skilled labor.” This meant that the organization of the “Negro force” was essential to the labor movement. Du Bois called for African-Americans to join well-

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 6-7.

¹⁸⁸ *Crisis*, September 1919, p. 231.

organized labor organizations that shield away from violence and “radical tendencies,” in order to bring “laborers of all races together and help diminish race prejudice.”¹⁸⁹

While Du Bois was no “lackey” of the government as the *Messenger* claimed, these editorials show that he took views favorable to government and big business interests on some issues. He preferred to work with labor groups like the AFL that would not push for drastic change. Other black periodicals expressed viewpoints favorable towards keeping the foundation of the existing order in place rather than tearing it up.

The *Competitor* wrote an editorial entitled “The Negro and Labor” that responded to the fall 1919 strikes in general. It supported the “natural desire” of the employer of labor to make a profit from the labor of his employee, “a right that should be protected.” Blacks should work within the system and use the “momentum” created by the war, as many “employees and white fellow-workers” had seen and appreciated the black commitment during the war. Black workers should stay away from strikes, which always “ended up with the Negro being thrown permanently out of employment.” The *Competitor* strongly criticized the fall 1919 strikes and affirmed that “no good” had come to African-Americans during these strikes. It emphasized the excessive violence committed against blacks that participated in the events.¹⁹⁰

In a subsequent editorial, “NEGRO LEADERSHIP AND THE PRESENT CRISIS,” the *Competitor* harshly criticized mob violence and declared that the strikes proved that the matter was “between those who believe in law and those who believe in lawlessness.” It insisted that “true Negroes” would never have anything to do with a radical labor group as the IWW, as it “only brought violence and disorder.” Black Americans should join the AFL, which “had opened the way for more and more colored industrial workers to enjoy the benefits of the labor

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 239-241.

¹⁹⁰ *Competitor*, January 1920, 17-18.

movement.” The *Competitor* also talked of a link between the fall 1919 strike chaos and radicalism, which it used to implore blacks to stay away from the IWW.¹⁹¹ The *Competitor* sided with mainstream newspaper’s insistence of a clear connection between the fall 1919 strikes and the presence of the IWW and the Bolsheviks.

Other Negro papers echoed the *Competitor’s* sentiments. A *Chicago Defender* editorial titled “The Boston Riots” implored black citizens to stick with the government and be “good citizens.” It told African-Americans to stay away from violence and set an example of “well ordered conduct and self-control.” It urged African-Americans to get along with white citizens and work together for the “self-preservation” of the country.¹⁹² In an ensuing editorial, “Labor’s Mistake,” the *Defender* criticized the Boston police and steel strikers as they did not believe in “honoring labor contracts while expecting their employers to hold to them as ‘iron-clad agreements.’” It maintained that “deceit” and “falsehood” ruled their every move. It condemned the steel strikers for their decision to leave their jobs with fall and winter approaching, illustrating their “selfish interests.” With such “dishonorable” actions, the *Defender* claimed that the country would have a “long and hard winter with necessities of life almost beyond the reach of average people.”¹⁹³

Several African-American papers took up the defense against perceived IWW threats with updated reports on its progress and by mocking IWW efforts to turn African-Americans. Shortly after the beginning of the steel strike, the *New York Age* wrote an article which stated: “IWW PROPAGANDA FUTILE IN PITTSBURG.” It affirmed that the IWW, as part of the steel strike, began a nation-wide effort to bring black Americans to its side. The IWW focused on Pittsburgh as one of its main targets due to a “sizeable Negro population” and the city being

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

¹⁹² *Chicago Defender*, September 20, 1919, p. 6.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, September 27, 1919, p. 6.

an “important steel hub.” All agitation between “white and black” the last few years was due to “IWW pressure.” It made this claim despite providing no direct evidence that the IWW indeed had anything to do with the various confrontations, or had begun a campaign to persuade African-Americans to join the strikers. The *Age* insisted that the IWW was “fighting a losing battle” as blacks believed “firmly in law and order.” Throughout the strikes, the *Age* ran articles like this to assure its readers that “their brethren” were staying “loyal.”¹⁹⁴

The *Independent* also took a stance favorable to the existing system of law and order. In an editorial entitled “The Demands in the Present Crisis,” the *Independent* proclaimed that “all strikes, mob violence, class and race warfare” could be directly traced to the “uprising of radical elements” and focused on the IWW and Bolsheviks as the principal leaders of “such an environment.” The *Independent* maintained that only when “Christian leaders of both races came together to fight against the IWW and Bolsheviks” would the problem be solved.¹⁹⁵ Mainstream America very likely approved of what periodicals like the *Independent*, *New York Age*, and the *Competitor* wrote in response to the fall 1919 strikes. While such journals wrote such words favorable to mainstream American way of life, other publications like the *Messenger* and the *Crusader* intensified their support of the strikers and critiques of those who opposed them.

In October 1919, the *Messenger* wrote a scathing editorial about Woodrow Wilson, which insisted that “all liberals and radicals, at home and broad” hated him for his “idealistic talk and plutocratic actions.” It maintained that Wilson constantly made public speeches where he talked about self-determination for all and the destruction of large corporate interests, but behind the scenes, he “was the emissary of the greatest capitalistic government of the world.” The

¹⁹⁴ *New York Age*, October 18, 1919, p. 2.

¹⁹⁵ *Independent*, October 4, 1919, p. 4.

Messenger declared that Wilson worked hand-in-hand with white business elites to keep blacks, laborers, and women inferior to the white man by “depriving the right to vote, looking the other way when Negro citizens were attacked, and denying workers the right to determine their own course.” It attested that Wilson had failed miserably as “a scholar, a national and international statesman, and in the role of arbiter of relations between races of the country.”¹⁹⁶

The *Messenger* continued its harsh attacks against W.E.B. Du Bois and the *Crisis* into the steel and coal strikes. In an editorial titled “The Negro Radicals,” the *Messenger* scoffed at claims of Du Bois being a radical for his stance on “lynching, enfranchisement, and segregation.” It insisted that “true radicals” stood for the overthrowing of the “American way of life” and urged all African-Americans to stand with the radical labor groups by using the strikes to “topple the ‘oppressive’ government and business elites.” Because Du Bois called for the avoidance of radical labor groups like the IWW and the “violent measures” needed for successful upheaval, the *Messenger* saw him as an “Uncle Tom.”¹⁹⁷

The *Messenger* separated itself even further from the mainstream perspective with its direct response to the steel and coal strikes. In December 1919, the *Messenger* wrote an editorial entitled “Strike Influenza” which went over all the strikes that had occurred in the past year and ended with a study of the current strikes. It traced the coal, steel, and other strikes to one “undeniable” reason: “American capital is one of the most hidebound, reactionary, archaic, narrow and visionless of any group in the world.” Against such an “evil,” the strikers had the overwhelming support of the *Messenger* and “true Negroes” who did not “cave in to the power interests.” This was designed as yet another dig at Du Bois.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ *Messenger*, October 1919, p. 33.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, December 1919, p. 6.

The *Crusader* editorial titled “Radicalism” followed the lead of the *Messenger* by calling radicalism the “herald of progress, the handmaiden of reform, a guide to civilization.” On the other hand, it maintained that those who stood for law and order were “obstructors of reform and the executioners of progress.” It pledged its support to the strikers and its “clear stance towards radicalism” without ever showing the ways the strikers had moved towards radicalism.¹⁹⁹

This won the *Crusader* praise from the *Messenger* in an editorial designated “The Crusader.” It congratulated the *Crusader* for its work on the strikes, calling it an “excellent addition to the field of radical journalism.” The *Messenger* led the reader to think that the *Crusader* and it were “brothers-in-arms” by attesting that a publication did not exist that the *Messenger* “agreed more wholeheartedly with.” It closed by reaffirming that the *Messenger* and the *Crusader* would “exchange all lists of agents with mutual profit and fraternity.”²⁰⁰ The *Messenger* used this flattery of the *Crusader* to criticize the *Crisis* by saying it had moved farther and farther away from this direction and had “dropped the ball as a guiding force” for others to follow.²⁰¹

Moving from its attacks of Du Bois, the *Messenger* frowned upon Calvin Coolidge’s reelection as governor. The *Messenger* editorial, “Wilson Congratulates Coolidge,” called mainstream newspaper talk of the election as a victory for law and order a “sham.” It insisted that anyone who believed in law and order wouldn’t have “raided Socialist party branches and IWW headquarters, destroyed their property, and injuring men with most wanton cruelty.” All of this occurred because of “capital’s” need to keep police nearby to “beat up other strikers.” If

¹⁹⁹ *Crusader*, October 1919, p. 7.

²⁰⁰ *Messenger*, November 1919, p. 6.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

all sides saw that they had a “common interest,” there would be no police and no “instrument of lawlessness and disorder to carry out the whims and wishes of capital, Wilson, and Coolidge.”²⁰²

The *Messenger* clearly sought to illustrate that those who claimed to be for law and order actually were the first to discard it when doing so to protect their interests.

The *Messenger* continued its series of critiques of the fall 1919 strikes with an editorial titled “The Miners’ Strike and the Negro.” It proclaimed that “a more just, proper, and legitimate strike has never been called in this country than that of the miners” and implored African-Americans to “unite” with them. It condemned what it saw as “a universal anti-black editor stance against the strike” by attesting that the editors got their “orders” from the “mine owners and the Republican Party bosses who controlled campaign funds going into the running of their papers.” The *Messenger* wanted the reader to see that such editors did not make these criticisms because they wanted to; they were controlled by outside interests who made them write such critiques. The *Messenger* offered no examples of such editors or no proof to back up its claim.²⁰³

The *Crusader* examined the criticism of Bolshevism and various other radical groups in one of its final examinations of the fall 1919 strikes. The *Crusader* editorial, “Bolshevism’s Menace: To Whom and To What?” objected to those who saw Bolshevism as a threat, especially African-American editors. Like the *Messenger*, it made Du Bois the central figure of its critique. It claimed that he had become the leading voice in an African-American editor upon Bolshevism and other radical elements and maintained that Du Bois and others like him had led their readers down the “wrong road into the hands of those who kept them ‘inferior.’” This implied that by taking anti-radical positions conducive to the government and business elite, such African-

²⁰² *Ibid.*, February 1920, p. 6.

²⁰³ *Crusader*, February 6, 1920, p. 6.

American editors had only intensified the problems of lynching, segregation, and the lack of the vote. By supporting Bolshevism, African-American leaders would help create a “new society where all would have a voice, not just a few.” The *Crusader* mocked democracy by claiming that it called for the “continued exploitation of women and young children under its ‘murderous’ capitalist system.” Because Bolshevism wanted to “liberate all people from their subservient chains,” the “capitalistic elite” sought its destruction. It closed by imploring its readers to reject the same course of action and support the continuance of “the strike.”²⁰⁴ The *Crusader* assumed like so many other publications, black and white, that those involved in the fall 1919 strikes were connected to Bolshevism and the IWW despite providing no concrete evidence to back such a claim.

Du Bois continued speaking out against violence and radicalism despite the harsh criticisms coming from such publications as the *Messenger* and the *Crusader*. In the November 1919 *Crisis*, he implored all blacks to reject violence and to stand “for the reign of law over the reign of the mob.” He chastised the strikers for their use “of the torch and gun” to accomplish their goals. Du Bois believed that the strikers had bought into the philosophies of the Bolsheviks and the IWW and used the many violent confrontations during the strikes as his evidence. To achieve the goal of ridding the country of lynching, disfranchisement, and segregation, African-Americans had to stand against the “rhetoric” of the Bolsheviks and the IWW. Du Bois attested that success would come through working with “mainstream elites” and showing them “the error of their ways.” He criticized those who called for radicalism and their methods and insisted the *Messenger* was the chief guilty party.²⁰⁵ Du Bois wrote several opinion pieces like this throughout the course of the fall 1919 strikes. He made it clear that he wanted his readers to stay

²⁰⁴ *Crusader*, February 6, 1920, p. 6.

²⁰⁵ *Crisis*, November 1919, p. 335.

away from what he believed to be “radical” movements and those who wanted to use the strikes to overthrow the country.

The other anti-strike African-American periodicals also did not waver from their opinions; they continued to stress the loyalty of the black population to the American way of life. In an editorial entitled “The Negro and the Strikes,” the *Independent* asserted that the steel and coal strikes were filled by “obstinate foreigners” who “worshipped the gospel of the IWW and the Bolsheviks.” The *Independent* made a distinct separation between these groups and the country’s black population. The *Independent* maintained that African-Americans shunned such “nonsense” because they loved “American institutions, the country’s traditions, and its law-and-order.” They found disloyalty against the government “abhorrent and distasteful.” Because of this, they would always stand against the strikers. The *Independent* called for the end of the strikes and the move towards “normalcy.”²⁰⁶

In a subsequent editorial titled “Attorney General Palmer Charges Colored Press Too Radical,” the *Independent* made a reference to a report by Palmer which maintained the black press continuously published radical articles during the riot and strike crisis. Palmer attested that black journalists were “radically opposed” to the government and the “rule of law-and-order.” The *Independent* reaffirmed the black commitment to the country and its authorities by claiming that the “true” black press told its readers “never to make a stand against the government and to always be loyal and obedient to it.” It lambasted what it saw as the “abnormal” cases of such periodicals as the *Messenger* and the *Crusader*. Anyone who called for uniting with the IWW against the established American system “was no friend of the Negro.” It implored Palmer and others to see that these periodicals did not speak for the “Negro, but a fanatical few.”²⁰⁷

²⁰⁶ *Independent*, November 22, 1919, p. 6.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, December 6, 1919, p. 6.

The *New York Age* also wrote an editorial about the Palmer report entitled “Report of the Department of Just on the Radical Negro Press.” It insisted that the African-American press, while skeptical of the Wilson Administration’s course of action in relation to lynching, disfranchisement, and segregation, never would call for any radical moves in relation to it. It reaffirmed African-American commitment to the Constitution and condemned any attempts to destroy it. It focused on the African-American press’ continuous criticism of the strikes to back its claim of loyalty to the country. It attested that if the black press wanted to overthrow the system, why would it stand against the strikes that provided a “golden opportunity” to do just that? Like the *Independent*, it talked of the *Messenger* and the *Crusader* as not being “legit” black journals by claiming that anyone who had moved in a “radical direction” had shifted away from “the anti-radical desires of the Negro.”²⁰⁸ Other periodicals examined, such as the *Chicago Defender* and the *Competitor*, also wrote similar editorials which emphasized black commitment to the country and decried what they saw as the radical fall 1919 strikes. These anti-strike journals also chastised the *Messenger* and the *Crusader* for their pro-strike, pro-radical stances.

Throughout World War I and the First Red Scare, the national government cracked down on perceived radical publications. It was no accident that most of this effort focused on black journals. The Wilson administration saw any black journalist who criticized the ills of lynching, segregation, and disenfranchisement and called for significant change in the existing economic and social order as expressing “radical tendencies.”²⁰⁹ All of the publications studied objected to the Wilson administration going into the war. The *Crisis*, the *Chicago Defender*, the *New York Age*, the *Competitor*, and the *Atlanta Independent* declared similar sentiments as the *Messenger* and the *Crusader* at the beginning of U.S. participation in the war.

²⁰⁸ *New York Age*, November 29, 1919, p. 8.

²⁰⁹ Kornweibel, *Investigate Everything*, p. 38.

The federal government made it a mission to stifle the expressions of black journalists. With the threats of jail time, loss of mailing services, the surveillance of periodicals, and committee investigations, it succeeded in getting many to back away from pre-war stances. The majority of black periodicals expressed moderate perspectives quite favorable to mainstream Americans. Journalists such as Du Bois, Abbott, Davis, and Johnson believed it expedient to move in a moderate direction. They believed that by doing so, African-Americans would receive better treatment after World War I and the First Red Scare. They also realized that the national government would eliminate their journals if they did not comply. The Wilson administration's scrutiny only intensified after the war due to fear of race riots, strike upheaval, and the looming Bolshevik presence. This led moderate black journalists to become even more low-key during the fall 1919 strikes. By urging their readers to stand against the strikers and resist the IWW and Bolsheviks, these writers ensured the continuance of their periodicals.

Randolph, Owen, and Briggs believed that they would compromise their radical beliefs by helping the national government during the war and the First red Scare. These editors also insisted that the Wilson administration would not bring about racial improvement even if African-Americans complied. This is why the *Messenger* and the *Crusader* continued to express opinion unfavorable to mainstream America, despite the scrutiny the federal government placed on the editors. Once the national government took away the *Messenger's* and *Crusader's* second-class mailing services and made the periodicals a key focal point of its investigation of African-American journals, the publications lost the majority of their readers. Without the funds needed to keep the *Messenger* and the *Crusader* afloat, Randolph, Owen, and Briggs were forced to shut down their journals shortly after the strikes ended.

Many historians that study black political history focus largely on the debate between Washington and Du Bois at the beginning of the twentieth century. Most works deal with this era up to Washington's death in 1915, but largely ignore the post-World War I era. The study of African-American periodicals shows that the dispute between "accommodationists" and "militants" continued well after Washington's death. The debate took on many complexities that did not exist at the beginning of the twentieth century. The war and the rise of the Bolsheviks led to the government to see a need to silence "militant" movements along African-Americans. While the government valued the support of Washington and condemned the criticisms of Du Bois, it did not feel compelled to combat "militant" expression before the war.

The presence of the Bolsheviks and perceived connection with minorities and labor unions led to mainstream pressure upon Du Bois, Abbott, Davis, Johnson, and others to modify their views. The issues of lynching, disenfranchisement, segregation, and migration did not go away during the World War I/First Red Scare period. Yet, many African-American leaders moved away from outward criticism of these problems. Individuals like Du Bois expressed sentiments favorable to government and the "status quo." This led Randolph and Owen to label him with the same "Uncle Tom" moniker Du Bois had once used on Washington. Militants argued for African-Americans to unite with Bolshevism and create a revolution to topple the American system of order. Randolph and Owen talked much like Du Bois did before the war. "Accommodationists" called for African-Americans to side with the government during the war and then during its confrontation with Bolshevism afterwards. Du Bois became one of the key figures echoing such sentiment because he hoped for better treatment towards African-Americans after the war and First Red Scare. The leader of "militant" viewpoints before the war became the guider of "accommodationist" expression during the war and post war period. This

illustrates the critical role the government and big business played in forcing change in African-American language. By doing so, mainstream America led the debate between “militant” and “accommodationist” stances in black politics to take a direction many could not have foreseen.

CHAPTER 5

FIRST RED SCARE STRIKES: THE RESPONSE OF LABOR PERIODICALS

Like African-American publications, labor periodicals during the 1919 fall strikes lacked a consensus of response. Considering these were strikes to help strengthen the position of labor unions, one might expect a strong level of support from labor publications. Instead, many labor periodicals expressed opinion that sided with mainstream America rather than the strikers. Labor journals reacted as they did due to mainstream American scrutiny of the level of immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe, African-American periodicals, and the presence of the Bolsheviks and the IWW.

From 1890-1920, the United States experienced a high level of immigration change. The national census illustrated a diverse range of foreign born. Los Angeles had a foreign born population of 10,857, 21.5% of its total populace; Atlanta 1,847, 2.8%; Savannah, 3,331, 7.8%; Chicago, 449,628, 40.5%; Washington, 18,517, 8%; New Orleans, 33,902, 14%; St. Louis, 114,610, 25%; and New York, 636,986, 42%. During later half of the 19th century, much of this immigration came from the “undesirable” locations of Eastern and Southern Europe.²¹⁰

Melvyn Dubofsky’s *Labor in America* maintains that immigrants during this period were mostly “Italians, Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Greeks, and Russians.” These newcomers struggled with miserable poverty levels as they lived in wretched living conditions and often lacked the basic necessities of food and shelter. In an effort to overcome their environment, these ethnic groups worked incredibly long hours with very little pay. This only further

²¹⁰ Department of the Interior, *Report on the Population of the United States*, pp. 451-485.

compounded their problems. Mainstream elite reacted to these largely uneducated newcomers with disdain and fear.²¹¹

By 1920, the number of foreign born had increased in large numbers or continued to stay close to the 1890 levels in the cities. Los Angeles now had a foreign born population of 112,057; 19.4% of its total populace; Atlanta had 4,738 foreign born residents, 2.8% of its overall population; Savannah, 3,247, 5.1%; Chicago, 805,482, 30%; Washington, 28,548, 6.5%; New Orleans, 25,992, 6.7%; St. Louis, 103,239, 13%; and New York, 1,991,547, 35%. Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York experienced the most significant increases; Chicago, 355,854, Los Angeles, 101,200, and New York, 1,354,561. Washington underwent a steady increase of 10,031. Atlanta, New Orleans, St. Louis, and Savannah all encountered declines, Atlanta, 2,891, New Orleans, 7,910, St. Louis, 11,371, and Savannah, 84. While the percentages of overall population decreased in all cases, except Atlanta, it is important to remember that the vast majority of foreign born in 1920 emigrated from the areas of Eastern and Southern Europe. Therefore, the issue continued to have critical importance for mainstream elites.²¹²

The Russian Civil War which led to the emergence of the Bolsheviks, the establishment of the IWW, and the memory of previous violent strikes such as Haymarket Square in 1886 all intensified the panic of government and big business. Labor periodicals faced the same pressures to comply with mainstream rhetoric against radicalism as African-American journals. This played a significant role in the response of labor publications towards the 1919 fall strikes. Labor journals, seeing the anti-black, anti-immigration furor of mainstream elites, largely designed their editorials and articles to placate it.

²¹¹ Melvyn Dubofsky, *Labor in America*, pp. 90-91.

²¹² Department of Commerce: Bureau of the Census, *14th Census of the U.S. taken in 1920*, pp. 118, 181, 222, 274, 405, 569, and 710.

During the war effort, many labor periodicals talked up the patriotism of labor. In an article entitled “American Labor Has its Heart, Brain, and Muscle in This War,” the *Labor Review* insisted that “true” workingmen stood united behind the war effort. It attested that American labor had given a stronger contribution to the war than any other group of people, especially the business owners. The *Labor Review* focused on the massive production of war supplies and the rejection of radicalism as illustrations of labor loyalty. It reiterated that the American laborer would never “desert the country” in such a critical time.²¹³

Articles like this attempted to convey to mainstream Americans that “proper” workers would not give them anything to worry about. That is why periodicals like the *Labor Review* felt it essential to stress American labor’s patriotism, war contributions, and repulsion of radicalism. By saying this, those running these publications wanted to make themselves and their audience seem as moderate as possible.

The escalation of the First Red Scare heightened the urgency of many labor journals to stress labor’s moderation. As the fall 1919 strikers met with disdain from mainstream America, many labor periodicals attempted to convey labor’s support of the existing system of order. A *Journal of Labor* editorial, “Anniversary Edition Announcement,” stressed the desire of labor to unite with big business against the “autocracy of the mob!” Breaking out in a tirade against radicalism and Bolshevism, it insisted that “radical immigrants” had come over from Europe trying to spread their “Bolshevik tendencies” to the American labor force. This is what led to the Boston police strike. The *Journal of Labor* maintained that while these efforts would lead to occasional violent breakouts, they would ultimately meet with failure because of the conservative nature of the American worker.²¹⁴

²¹³ *Labor Review*, September 28, 1918, p. 1.

²¹⁴ The *Journal of Labor*, September 19, 1919, p. 2.

A *Labor Review* article, “Labor More Loyal to Government than Capital,” contended that mainstream papers and their “corporate owners” tried to convince people that the Boston police and steel strikes indicated that labor did not stand with the national government. Realizing the consequences if the Wilson administration believed this to be true, the *Labor Review* talked about the low pay rates, the long hours, and the wretched living conditions that many workers had to endure. American laborers only sought improvement in these areas and were repulsed by the radical cries for dramatic change. It blamed the visible level of strike violence on big business abuses rather than strikers leaning towards the IWW and Bolsheviks. It closed by reaffirming the workingmen’s dedication to the American way of life.²¹⁵

In an article about the Boston police strike titled “Police Not Traitors,” the *Labor Review* examined the words and actions of the strikers and attempted to illustrate that they were patriotic. It inspected their war contributions and insisted that the vast majority of the strikers had served in the war with honor. It looked at the words of one striker who said: “When we were honorably discharged from the United States Army, we were hailed as heroes and as saviors of our country.” Now, the local government and many others accused them of having “Bolshevistic tendencies.” The *Labor Review* asked: “How could this be?” Such loyal individuals would not become radical over such a short time. It reaffirmed the strikers’ dedication to the country and proclaimed that they wanted only improvement in their working condition.²¹⁶

Journals such as the *Labor Review* realized that government and mainstream America would crack down on anyone they deemed radical. In order to voice support for strikes, they had to make it clear that the strikers wanted absolutely nothing to do with radicalism. They could

²¹⁵ The *Labor Review*, p. 3.

²¹⁶ The *Labor Review*, November 1, 1919, p. 4.

best do this by talking up the strikers' allegiance to the American way of life and give examples of previous patriotic commitments.

Not all labor periodicals expressed such devoted support of the existing order. In a scathing editorial entitled "The Red Terror," the *New Justice* looked at mainstream America's lambasting of Bolshevism and its talk of combating it. In an examination of Bolshevism, the *New Justice* insisted that the Bolsheviks sought to create a society where "everyone who worked would be able to vote." After saying this, the *New Justice* condemned the inability of women, African-Americans, and many immigrants to vote due to the "racist, sexist, white men who called the shots in business and government." It praised Soviet Russia for giving women the right to vote and maintained that this showed the Bolshevik recognition of the "gentle sex." The *New Justice* exalted Soviet Russia's policy of keeping children under the age of eighteen from working, and its decision to give the land of Russia to the peasants over that of the U.S. which made millions of little "slave in mills, factories, and sweat-shops," and "big business tycoons" owned all the means of production and the land the workers lived on. It closed by mocking mainstream America's claims that the Bolsheviks wanted to spread their ways to the U.S. It insisted that Soviet Russia desired to be "left alone to work its own destiny without being interfered with by other nations or interfering in their affairs." The *New Justice* called Soviet Russia the "true democracy" and urged the American workingman to follow the principles of Bolshevism.²¹⁷

In a subsequent editorial, "A Policeman's Union," the *New Justice* stood behind the Boston police strikers and their attempts to join a union. It insisted that the strikers needed to do this to survive against the "corrupt" local government and chastised Police Commissioner Curtis and Governor Coolidge for trying to "crush the fair demands" of the strikers. To defend

²¹⁷ The *New Justice*, September 1, 1919, p. 2.

themselves against the “oppressive ways” of mainstream America, the *New Justice* called for all policemen in the country to follow suit and create a national police union.²¹⁸

In a backing of *New Justice's* claims, an editorial in the *Labor Age* titled “The Boston Police Strike” affirmed that the Boston police strikers had not wanted to do anything “dramatic” against the local government and only sought improvement of their low pay and long hours. The *Labor Age* insisted that the blame for the conflict rested with Police Commissioner Curtis, Governor Coolidge, and the local press for refusing to compromise and work with the strikers. When Curtis, Coolidge, and the press saw that they could not force the strikers back to their “abject” way of life, they created the “illusion” of “radical policemen.” By harping on the presence Bolshevism being behind the strike, the local government knew that they would get mainstream America’s support. While the *Labor Age* vigorously supported the spread of Bolshevism, it insisted that the Bolsheviks had nothing to do with the strike.²¹⁹

The *American Federationist*, the leading conservative labor periodical run by AFL chief Samuel Gompers, struck back at these claims in an editorial entitled “Trade Unions and Bolshevism.” Gompers insisted that Bolshevism had everything to do with the Boston police and steel strikes because it sought to destroy everything that the United States stood for and looked at labor as a good place to start. The *American Federationist* called for its readers to create a “well-organized trade union movement,” as this would reject the use of violence and radical means towards bringing labor improvements. It claimed that if this had existed in Russia, “Bolshevism would have never obtained a ‘stranglehold’ over the country.”²²⁰

A subsequent *American Federationist* article, “Labor, its Grievances, Protests, and Demands,” insisted that “reactionaries” among the Bolsheviks and IWW had “attempted to

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²¹⁹ The *Labor Age*, September 1919, p. 27.

²²⁰ The *American Federationist*, December 1919, p. 13.

classify the men and women of labor with them.” It affirmed that “true” laborers had absolutely nothing to do with these groups and only followed “conservative principles.” The *American Federationist* denounced radical periodicals like the *Messenger* which got African Americans “stirred up” in an effort to bring their “revolutionary means” to fruition. It maintained that this led to the violent confrontations during the steel strike. The *American Federationist* attested that blacks were most susceptible to radicalism and focused on incidents like that at Gary as its key evidence. It closed by urging its readers to “contest every effort made to fasten tyranny and injustice” upon the American people.²²¹

The *American Federationist* did not offer any direct evidence that a link existed between the IWW, Bolshevism, and African-Americans. Very few blacks paid much attention to IWW and Bolshevik attempts to recruit them. The confrontations that took place during the steel strike involving blacks occurred because the owners of the steel plants hired African-Americans as scabs. The owners pushed for African-Americans to take over the vacated positions and encouraged them to use violence in disputes with the strikers. By doing so, they knew that mainstream press would talk up these incidents. Steel plant owners realized that this would help them to crush the strikes.²²²

Other conservative labor publications followed the lead of the *American Federationist*. A *Labor Review* editorial, “Steel-A Testing Ground for All Those Who Profess to Love Democracy!” insisted that the majority of steel strikers, which it labeled “white, skilled laborers,” sought only the improvement of working conditions and rejected the attempts of the IWW and Bolsheviks to convert them. It declared that the unskilled ranks consisted of “foreigners and blacks” who “heeded the calls of radicalism” and blamed the steel strike violence

²²¹ The *American Federationist*, January 1920, pp. 40.

²²² Murray, *Red Scare*, pp. 144-146.

upon them. The *Labor Review* proclaimed that “proper” labor unions wanted nothing to do with these individuals and sought a peaceful solution with the steel owners. By detailing the “loyalty” of the strikers, and labor’s “patriotic” contributions of labor since World War I, the *Labor Review* wanted its readers to see that the American workingman desired to preserve the existing system. American labor only had “reasonable” demands, which included such requests as the right of collective bargaining, increase in wages, and one day’s rest in seven.²²³

Radical labor periodicals, such as the *New Justice* and the *Labor Age*, critiqued conservative labor claims that strikers wanted to work with mainstream America. In an editorial titled “The Era of the Strike,” the *New Justice* maintained that the country was experiencing an era of “tremendous strikes” which would “rock” the existing order and the government to “its foundations.” It urged African-Americans to join the strike efforts in unity with the IWW and Bolshevism. The steel strike illustrated that many blacks had already made the decision to do so. It implored its readers, “regardless of sex, race, or creed” to come together in a universal effort against the government and big business.²²⁴

An editorial in the *Labor Age* entitled “The Steel Strike and the Bill of Rights” asserted that the steel strike encompassed a “nationwide battle zone” which included all classes and races and would lead to the “overthrow of capitalism.” Like the *New Justice*, it entreated all to join the strikers in this effort. It praised African-Americans who had joined the strike and called for more to participate. Since “true justice” would come only from uniting the strike struggles with radicalism, the *Labor Age* attested that blacks also needed to support the IWW and Bolsheviks. Claiming that the mainstream press spread “lies” about the steel strikers, the *Labor Age*

²²³ The *Labor Review*, October 11, 1919, p. 8.

²²⁴ The *New Justice*, October 1919, p.1.

proclaimed that mainstream newspapers worked for the “capitalistic interests” and urged its readers not to heed the words of such periodicals.²²⁵

Labor journals wrote about the coal strike much the same way as the steel. In an editorial, “The Coal Miner’s Protest,” the *Journal of Labor* maintained that the coal workers did not want to strike and harm the nation. In response to mainstream media’s claims that the strikers ran to leave their posts at the first opportunity, the *Journal of Labor* insisted that coalmine operators forced that strike upon the coal workers. The strikers sought only to better their living conditions. After repeated attempts to convey these concerns to the mine owners “fell on deaf ears,” the coal strikers had no other recourse. In an effort to illustrate the strikers’ loyalty to the country and their hope to get the strike ended in short time, the *Journal of Labor* examined the words of United Mine Workers of America President Lewis. Lewis insisted that the strikers were “Americans and could not fight their government.” He talked about past efforts of coal strikers in which they had always “pledged their support to Americanism.” The *Journal of Labor* believed that these words proved that the strikers stood with the country in its efforts against radicalism and would not take the strike down a radical path.²²⁶

An *American Federationist* editorial, “The Core of the Miners’ Strike,” backed the *Journal of Labor* by declaring that the coal strikers only wanted to reduce their work hours, create a six-day work week, and increase their wages. They had no other desires beyond this. It lashed out at mainstream papers for claiming that Bolsheviks led the coal strikers as the vast majority of strikers expressed aversion towards the Bolshevik and IWW movements. Like the *Journal of Labor*, it focused on the “patriotic” service of coal miners during World War I.²²⁷

²²⁵ The *Labor Age*, January 1920, pp. 94-95.

²²⁶ The *Journal of Labor*, October 24, 1919, p. 8.

²²⁷ The *American Federationist*, December 1919, p. 57.

A subsequent *American Federationist* editorial, “Lying, The Barrier to Justice,” further developed these claims by affirming that mainstream newspapers talked up the violence during the steel and coal strikes. They wanted the public to think that Bolshevism had run amuck among the strikers. It insisted that while some black and foreign elements fell prey to the Bolshevik deceit, the overwhelming number of strikers had rejected it. It proclaimed that a “stunning absence of violence” existed during the strikes which illustrated the self-control of the strikers, a “trait the Bolsheviks knew little about.” This proved the loyalty of the strikers and that they only wanted limited change.²²⁸

In an editorial, “The Truth About Soviet Russia and Bolshevism,” the *American Federationist* focused on the “truth” about Bolshevism. It insisted that the “Soviet propagandists” in America, including periodicals such as the *Messenger*, the *Crusader*, and the *New Justice*, sought to make Bolshevism the “domineering force” in the country by inciting violence and stirring up the “black, foreign elements.” The *American Federationist* criticized claims that the Bolshevik system of order Soviet Russia was more ideal than that in the U.S. It affirmed that most of the peasant class, which the Bolsheviks claimed to have created their government for, could not vote. It attested that evidence could be found in the new Soviet constitution which disfranchised nearly “four-fifths of the population.” The *American Federationist* declared that the Soviet government, which the radical publications “bragged up so much,” consisted of a “small majority which governed the rest of the Russians under the rule of ‘absolutism’” It proclaimed that the Bolshevik leadership used “torture, false trials, or executions” to get people to comply. It asked its readers, “Is this what you want your country to turn into?” It urged the coal strikers to reject the coercive measures promoted by Bolshevism.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, January 1920, pp. 153-154.

While it did not condemn the strike, the *American Federationist* contended that the “Bolshevistic elements” would attempt to use it as a means to beset the existing system of order.²²⁹

The *Journal of Labor* and *Labor Review* reiterated these words. In an editorial titled “Government by the Majority,” the *Journal of Labor* praised the leadership of Gompers and his “enthusiastic approval” of the American government as the “best form of government ever created.” It insisted that the coal strikers, like so many other American laborers, agreed with Gompers siding with “Americanism and reason” instead of “Bolshevism and passion.”²³⁰ In an editorial entitled “Democracy and Production; They March Together,” the *Labor Review* claimed that the coal strike, like the steel strike, sought to strengthen democracy by making a stand for the betterment of working conditions and improvement of production. In doing so, the strikers would ensure the protection of democracy. It attested that while radical elements were a threat to democracy, so were business owners who tried to “dominate their workers.” This stifled the growth of democracy in industry and threatened the American way of life unless a stand was made.²³¹

While the conservative labor publications attempted to demonstrate that the coal strikers stood with the United States and wanted no upheaval, the radical labor periodicals claimed that the coal strike was yet another attempt to undermine capitalism. A *Labor Age* editorial, “Coal Dust,” affirmed that the coal strikers fought against the “unjustifiable and unlawful” business and government interests who had abused them for decades. It attested that the coal strike furthered the goals of the Bolsheviks and IWW by describing it as “a ‘workers’ rather than a ‘leaders’ movement, a large-scale example of ‘mass action.’” The coal strikers sought the “nationalization

²²⁹ The *American Federationist*, February 1920, pp. 159-161.

²³⁰ The *Journal of Labor*, December 12, 1919, p. 4.

²³¹ The *Labor Review*, November 29, 1919, p. 4.

and worker management of all coal mines in the country.” By doing this, the *Labor Age* contended that the coal strike would help bring a “new age” to the nation.²³²

The *New Justice* sided with the *Labor Age* in an editorial titled “The Right to Strike.” Insisting that the government had continuously attempted to keep the labor class “down” with the introduction of anti-strike legislation, the *New Justice* contended that American workers had the right to fight back at such “injustices.” The coal strikers backed Bolshevism because it would give the workers what they wanted, dramatic and violent change. Therefore, the coal strike, like the Boston police and steel strikes, was yet another attempt to “topple capitalism.”²³³

Like African-American periodicals during this period, labor publications reacted to the fall 1919 strikes with a diverse range of opinion. Journals, such as the *American Federationist*, backed the government and the current system of order. Maintaining that the strikers only sought improvement in their working relations with the business owners and government, they claimed that the strikers looked at radicalism with disdain. Other periodicals, like the *New Justice*, attested that the strikers desired to overthrow the existing economic, political, and social hierarchy, as they were united with the goals of Bolshevism and the IWW. Why did such a divergence of opinion exist among the labor publications? Government pressure, like it did with many black journals, influenced numerous labor periodicals to modify their writing. Editors of these publications believed it to be in their best interests to comply. Geographical location of the journals also played a role in the type of response.

Samuel Gompers, the leading force of conservative American labor during this time, immigrated to the United States at the age of 13. His family moved to New York during the apex of the Civil War. Gompers grew up in a working-class neighborhood where many people

²³² The *Labor Age*, January 1920, pp. 89-90.

²³³ The *New Justice*, January 1920, p. 2.

struggled with low pay, long hours, and wretched living conditions. This experience drew Gompers towards labor unions, as he sought to do something to help such people improve their lives. He joined the Cigar Makers' International Union of America and participated in the cigarmakers' strike in 1872. Proclaiming an affection for radical change, Gompers talked about the need for laborers to take over production and control of their destiny.²³⁴

Gompers moved from working solely with the cigar-makers to uniting with the eight hour movement in the 1880's. He deplored the current system in which workers had to work over sixty hours a week. He became a member of Knights of Labor during this period and quickly became disillusioned with its policies, as it called for its members to reject calls for a national strike for the eight-hour movement. Gompers sought a universal strike movement, which he believed would bring victory over the business owner. Gompers expressed support of anarchism and its violent means even after much of organized labor condemned it after the Haymarket Square massacre of 1886. Gompers backed the anarchist suspects; upon hearing of their death sentence, he urged the governor to commute the sentence. This illustrates that Gompers originally expressed support of radicalism and would have likely sided with Bolshevism and the IWW if they had been present during this time.²³⁵

Gompers became disenchanted with the Knights of Labor due to its reluctance to use strikes as a weapon and refusal to back the Haymarket suspects. He decided to become part of a growing labor organization called the American Federation of Labor at the end of 1886. Within a year, he became its president. Early on as AFL president, he pushed for strikes and whatever means necessary to achieve victory. After seeing the violent strikes at Homestead, Pennsylvania on July 6, 1892 where Pennsylvania militiamen were used to crush the uprising, and at Coeur d'

²³⁴ Bernard Weisberger: Samuel Gompers: Illustrious American (Morristown, New Jersey: Silver Burdett Company, 1967), pp. 9-10, 29-30.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 40-42.

Alene, Idaho, where federal troops came in and killed several silver miners, Gompers believed he needed to change his strategy. Realizing the strong alliance between capital and government and their ability to strike back viciously at labor, Gompers began his move towards conservatism.²³⁶

Beginning in the early 1900's, Gompers insisted that radicalism was wrong because of their use of violence and their criticism of labor unions, especially the AFL. Radicals criticized the AFL, as it consisted exclusively of skilled laborers and rejected women, minorities, and the majority of immigrants, and Gompers for developing such policies. In response, Gompers became increasingly bitter towards radicals and moved away from previous discussion of "wage slavery" and the "emancipation of labor." Gompers believed that labor would be better off working with government and big business.

When the U.S. government decided to enter World War I, Gompers stood with it. He remembered big business' and federal government's harsh response to previous strikes and knew that they would crack down on any uprising. He felt that to protect what labor already had and to promote further gains, he needed to support the war effort and stand against radicalism. Gompers spent much of the war making venomous attacks against socialism, the IWW, and the emergence of Bolshevism in his publication, the *American Federationist*. He urged the American workingman to reject radical calls to stand against the war and fight against current business injustice. He pushed for the AFL to make a no-strike pledge and express support of President Wilson. By doing so, Gompers and the AFL avoided government scrutiny. Instead, Wilson went to the AFL convention in 1917 where he expressed his admiration of Gompers and choose him and various other AFL officials to go to Europe to meet with Allied labor leaders in

²³⁶ Bernard Mandel, *Samuel Gompers* (Yellow Springs, Ohio: The Antioch Press, 1963), pp. 239-240.

August 1918. Wilson designed this trip as a way to bolster their morale and believed Gompers the best suited to do this.²³⁷

The partnership between Gompers and Wilson continued into the First Red Scare. Gompers asserted that American labor needed to continue its stand with the national government in order to ensure future prosperity, due to mainstream panic towards Bolshevism and radical labor organizations like the IWW. Feeling that he needed to disassociate himself and the AFL from radicalism, Gompers used the *American Federationist* to speak out against violent strike movements, to criticize the perceived presence of black Americans and immigrants in radical labor groups, and encourage a working relationship between labor and government. By the fall 1919 strikes, Gompers had clearly moved far away from his previous support of radicalism. He became the leading labor figure to fight against it.²³⁸

Unlike the *American Federationist*, the *New Justice* stood by radicalism. Believing American news reporting of the Russian Revolution and Civil War to be severely perverted, a board of 16 editors created the *New Justice* to give a voice to the Bolshevik Revolution. Working out of Los Angeles, the *New Justice* editors immediately became the target of the *Los Angeles Times*, which called the journal “the organ of the Los Angeles Bolsheviks.” The Wilson Administration made the *New Justice* a focal point of its minority and labor periodical scrutiny. The editors responded by supporting the spread of Bolshevism to the United States, the union of Bolsheviks with American labor, and harshly criticizing Wilson.²³⁹

As it did with the *Messenger* and the *Crusader*, the national government kept close surveillance of the *New Justice*, took away second class mailing privileges, and threatened to shut down the journal. This did not intimidate the *New Justice* editors as they continued to

²³⁷ Weisberger, *Samuel Gompers: Illustrious American*, pp. 81-82.

²³⁸ Mandel, *Samuel Gompers*, pp. 477-478.

²³⁹ Schmidt, *Red Scare*, pp. 174-176.

champion Bolshevism. They portrayed the 1919 fall strikes as an opportunity to broaden the “revolutionary” movement. This is why the *New Justice* talked about the “true democracy,” Bolshevik Russia, called for the joining of all races, ethnicities, and sexes in the 1919 strike movements, and chastised “conservative” labor leaders such as Gompers.²⁴⁰

The *New Justice* clearly sought a conflict with the federal government and the “capitalist” order. This is why it did not curb its venomous language during the fall 1919 strikes. Like other journals that did not modify their words, the *New Justice* found it increasingly difficult to stay afloat. The national government made it a priority to weaken the *New Justice* by confiscating copies of the publication, bringing in the editors to read them the riot act, and working with mainstream papers, like the *Los Angeles Times*, to warn the American public. The *New Justice* lost most of its readers and found itself forced to fold in early 1920.²⁴¹

The *Journal of Labor* and the *Labor Review* expressed positions very similar to that of the *American Federationist* during the fall 1919 strikes. While research found little dealing specifically with these publications, one can deduce several reasons why they responded as they did. Both journals saw Gompers as the leading figure of American labor and pledged their support to him. Since he believed it to be in labor’s best interest to work with the Wilson Administration, it behooved the periodicals to take a similar course of action. Like the *American Federationist*, this ensured the survival of these journals in the years following the 1919 fall strikes. Location also likely played a critical role in the response of these publications. Both came from the South, the *Journal of Labor* from Atlanta, and the *Labor Review* from Savannah. Compared to other regions of the country, the South clearly sided with the conservative viewpoint. The editors of these papers, writing for the readership of this area, likely found it

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 177-178.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 178-179.

expedient to take a conservative stance in relation to the strikes. This is why they focused on the perceived connection between Bolshevism, the IWW, and black Americans, and why they stressed the patriotism of the American workingman.²⁴²

As with the *Journal of Labor* and *Labor Review*, research could find little that examined the *Labor Age*. But one can infer why it wrote as it did. The *Labor Age* published out of New York City, a hotbed of radical activity. Many of the county's immigration population flocked to the area and became the journal's primary readership. Since mainstream America labeled many of its readers "radical," it made sense for the *Labor Age* to advocate Bolshevism and the IWW. The *Labor Age* and the *New Justice* expressed nearly identical language in their response to fall 1919 strikes. Since the *New Justice* believed Bolshevism and the IWW would vastly improve the living and working condition of American labor, the *Labor Age* likely felt this to be the main reason to champion it. This is why it harped on the perceived connection between the strikes, Bolshevism, and the IWW. Also similar to the *New Justice*, the latest *Labor Age* journal that could be found is in early 1920. Considering the harsh reaction such radical publications as the *Messenger*, the *Crusader*, and the *New Justice* received from the Wilson Administration, one can surmise that the *Labor Age* likely did as well. This would have dramatically impacted the economic standing of the periodical and forced it to an early end.²⁴³

²⁴² Dubofsky, *Labor in America*, pp. 221-223.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 223-224.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The leading work on the First Red Scare, Robert Murray's *Red Scare*, focuses on the events that led to the strikes during 1919 and big business' response to it. He addresses the owners of steel, coal, and the Boston city government and their uniting with the federal government to stifle the strike efforts. While he does discuss mainstream newspapers and their reaction, he does not deal with such publications as being a big business themselves, nor does he deal with minority and labor publications.

This thesis has attempted to illustrate that mainstream newspapers were run by wealthy editors and owners who worried that the strikes would threaten their interests. They focused on the perceived presence of the Bolsheviks and the IWW during the labor unrest and became determined to extinguish the 1919 fall strikers. They also worked with the national government to coerce minority and labor periodicals to follow the mainstream line.

Any book on the First Red Scare needs to examine the reaction of African-American and labor journals to the strikes. This thesis addresses the manner in which the Wilson Administration teamed with mainstream newspapers to pressure the minority and labor periodical owners and editors. The First Red Scare involved the frenzy of mainstream America toward alien ideologies and their connection to domestic labor unrest. Many people lost their constitutional rights of free speech; those running African-American and labor publications headed the list. Individuals, such as Asa Randolph and Chandler Owen, who did not comply with the wishes of the federal government and mainstream newspapers, found their journals

under attack. Many such as the *New Justice* and the *Crusader* did not survive. The reaction of mainstream America to these journals illustrates the themes of the First Red Scare. One needed to speak against Bolshevism and the IWW and express unity with the current system of order to survive. This is why periodicals like the *Crisis* dramatically changed their language. To understand the First Red Scare, one must examine African-American and labor publications. Murray claims in *Red Scare* that he attempts to provide a “full-length analysis of the First Red Scare.”²⁴⁴ Without addressing the role black and labor journals played during this period, Murray has not fulfilled his goal. He does not examine how government scrutiny led many African-American and labor editors to change the language of their journals from the war to the First Red Scare. He does not address how black and labor periodicals attacked each other during this period. Labor publications, especially the *American Federationist*, insisted that African-Americans, due to their attraction to Bolshevism, were responsible for the violence of the period. This thesis presents a more comprehensive examination of the First Red Scare than Murray does.

Murray is correct in stating: “Nowhere in print does a full-length analysis of the First Red Scare exist.”²⁴⁵ He made this claim fifty years ago and little has changed. So many publications have dealt with the Second Red Scare and attest that it begins towards the end of World War II. Books on such Second Red Scare topics as McCarthyism, the beginning of the nuclear age, and the creation of NATO abound. On the First Red Scare, only Murray’s publication exists. More writers need to tackle the First Red Scare and give it a “full-length analysis.” This thesis, by incorporating the presence of African-American and labor journals during this period, has attempted to start such a study.

²⁴⁴ Murray, *Red Scare*, p. ix.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Several World War I publications briefly look at the First Red Scare, such as Jordan's *Black Newspapers and America's War for Democracy* and Ellis's *Race, War and Surveillance*. They briefly describe what black periodicals said during this time and link their evidence to the war period, as these writers focus mainly on the war era. They illustrate the reaction of black journals to the war and the pressure the Wilson Administration used to get African-American publications to support the effort. Unfortunately, these works do not portray the many similarities between the war period and the First Red Scare.

Both Jordan and Ellis claim that Robert Abbott took an antagonistic stand against the national government and capitalism during the war period. They insist that Abbott would not back away from his principles. He wanted African-Americans to push aggressively to change the economic, political, and social order. But during the First Red Scare, Abbott moved away from these views and urged his readers to stand with the federal government and defend the country against Bolshevism. He emphasized the patriotic spirit of black Americans and maintained that they wanted nothing to do with the Bolsheviks. He implored his audience to reject violence and work together with white Americans. Abbott changed his previously stated beliefs to ensure his paper's survival and his protection against governmental reprisal. Because Jordan and Ellis largely ignore the First Red Scare and do not include labor periodicals as part of their study, these two leading authors of black periodical response during the war period miss this dramatic change in Abbott and many other African-American editors.

Jordan and Ellis fail to include any response of labor journals to black publications and vice-versa. Those running labor and black periodicals tried to demonstrate their loyalty to the country by painting the other in a bad light. Labor journals insisted that African-Americans played a big role in the violent wartime and First Red Scare riots and maintained that many black

Americans did support Bolshevism. Black journals responded by insisting on their allegiance and criticized the strikers. Black editors like James Johnson urged their readers to turn away from the strike efforts. They focused on the presence of the Bolsheviks and IWW during the strikes as the critical reason for African-Americans to reject the movements. A full understanding of black publications during this period requires inclusion of their interaction with labor periodicals.

David Kennedy's *Over Here* is one of the leading World War I books which attempt to link the war to the First Red Scare frenzy. He examines the labor and minority presence during the period. He insists that the Wilson Administration attempted to prevent workers from striking by making deals with labor leaders. These labor figures expected this administrative favor to last after the conflict. When it did not, it impelled the fall 1919 strike movements.²⁴⁶

Kennedy attests that black Americans largely stood behind the federal government during the war period. African-American leaders saw this as an opportunity to further the race with job opportunity, growth in wealth and prestige, and recognition of black contributions to the war. They believed that many economic, political, and social wrongs would be corrected after the war. When this did not happen, many black Americans protested.²⁴⁷

Kennedy believes that broken promises and the loss of opportunity following the war led to the First Red Scare frenzy. He focuses on labor and African-Americans, but Kennedy makes no use of their journals during or after the war. Black and labor publications clearly show the belief of the majority of leaders that the war provided a possibility to bring desperately desired change. When this did not happen, several wanted to fight to overturn the system. The Wilson Administration and the big business elites consequently strove to stifle these periodicals- a

²⁴⁶ Kennedy, *Over Here*, pp. v-vi.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 282-283.

critical part of the war period and First Red Scare. Kennedy seeks to link the two, but does not use the evidence provided by black and labor journals, which would have strengthened his arguments. These publications clearly show the link between failed World War I promises and the fall 1919 strikes.

Other works which include the First Red Scare as part of a larger study, like Brown and Curry's *Conspiracy: The Fear of Subversion in American History*, do little with the media. Brown and Curry claim that mainstream Americans had an intense fear of "outsiders" and use the Wilson Administration's response to the Russian Civil War as primary evidence.²⁴⁸ The national government and big business response to black and labor journals during the fall 1919 strikes provide compelling evidence to back their thesis. By denying editors of these publications their voice, mainstream America clearly exhibited a phobia of "outsiders." The efforts of the federal government to suffocate the critical black and labor periodicals strengthen the contentions made by Brown and Curry.

This project has also expanded upon the works that look at labor history such as Joseph A. McCartin's *Labor's Great War* and Melvyn Dubofsky's *Labor in America*. McCartin claims that the labor struggles of the Progressive period led to the victory of industrial democracy and an understanding of this will allow the reader to see in this period the "origins of those patterns that have shaped American labor relations for the rest of the 20th century."²⁴⁹ McCartin affirms that mighty corporate owners did not want industrial democracy to succeed because it would give workers more of a voice in the daily running of their businesses. Their efforts to thwart the rise of industrial democracy led to the labor conflicts of the late 19th/early 20th centuries.²⁵⁰ But by ignoring the fear of "others", race, class, and ideology, McCartin fails to use the vast evidence

²⁴⁸ Brown and Curry, *Conspiracy*, pp. 154-155.

²⁴⁹ McCartin, *Labor's Great War*, pp. 6-7.

²⁵⁰ Dobofsky and Dulles, *Labor in America*, p. ix.

that would strength his assertions. To grasp the rise of industrial democracy requires the examination of the role that African Americans and the working class played in it. The media provide excellent illustration of this connection.

Dubofsky examines the rise of new immigrants during the period from 1881-1921, the growth of non-whites in the labor force, and the altering of the definition of work with fewer employees producing goods and more producing services and knowledge.²⁵¹ Dubofsky insists that all of this directly led to the rise in violence seen during the First Red Scare. While this is a quality publication, Dubofsky does not make use of the media, which dealt with all of his key focal points.

Books such as John Higham's *Strangers in the Land* and articles like Gary Gestle's *Liberty, Coercion, and the Making of Americans* are two leading works that examine nativism and immigration. Higham argues that mainstream Americans feared the rise of Eastern and Southern European immigrants and developed "Americanization" as a way to speed up the assimilative process of so many 'undesirable' immigrants. They sought to combat immigration with education and social reform.²⁵² By educating "new" people and improving the way of life, leaders claimed that this would make immigrants better citizens and protect the American way of life. If they resisted these efforts, mainstream Americans would use the national government to help silence "unwanted newcomers" and remove them. Higham examines the Bolshevik revolution and believes it directly led to the First Red Scare. He insists that mainstream desire to crush the Bolsheviks abroad and at home led to the First Red Scare frenzy. By trying to push their ways on immigrants, they created a backlash that helped stir up the fall 1919 strikes.²⁵³

²⁵¹ Dubofsky and Dulles, *Labor in America*, p. ix.

²⁵² Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, p. xi.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*

Like so many others, Higham does not deal with the media presence during this time. As this thesis shows, the mainstream media focused on “Americanization” and forced it upon the African-American and labor journals. These latter publications had to urge the advancement of “Americanization.” If they did not, the Wilson administration would silence them. These periodicals continuously examined the presence of Bolshevism during the war and First Red Scare periods and their use would have greatly served Higham.

Gerstle declares that nativism has existed in the United States since the late 18th century and traces its development through the First Red Scare. He insists that “issues of class, race, and national power have constrained and sometimes defeated immigrant efforts to be free of their past.”²⁵⁴ He proclaims that immigrant failure to gain a decent existence led to reluctance to move away from their native heritage towards Americanization. Mainstream efforts to force this upon them directly led to the violent conflicts during the early 20th century.²⁵⁵ Even though mainstream, African-American, and labor journals during this era focus on these issues, Gerstle does not incorporate this in his work. These publications illustrate that wealthy owners and editors of the mainstream periodicals had a vital interest in maintaining class and race distinctions. Displaying their nationalism in editorials and cartoons, mainstream newspapers worked with the federal government to pressure black and labor journals to follow suit. Gerstle would have enhanced his work by using such evidence.

Finally, this thesis critiques the many journal history publications that tell congratulatory stories. Books such as Chalmers Roberts *The Washington Post* and Marshall Berges *The Life and Times of Los Angeles* praise the owners and editors of periodicals such as the *Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times*. Roberts claims that those who ran the *Washington Post* from

²⁵⁴ Gerstle, “Liberty, Coercion, and the Making of Americans.” *The Journal of American History*, pp. 557-558.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

the late 19th century to the early 20th century should be honored for their work with the national government. By defending the Wilson administration, Roberts insists that the *Post* helped to win a war and defeat dissension at home.²⁵⁶ Roberts ignores the *Post's* support of the closing down of journals that did not agree with its views, the harsh criticism leveled towards black Americans and labor unions, and the labeling of such groups as having “Bolshevistic” tendencies. Berges lauds the *Los Angeles Times* for helping to accelerate the growth of the city towards the late 19th to the early 20th century. The *Times* helped Los Angeles to grow with money spent on developmental projects, advisement of city and events, and participation of key *Times* officials in local politics.²⁵⁷ Berges does not investigate how the *Times*, like so many other mainstream journals, called for the silencing of African-Americans and the working class, nor does he examine how it called for the destruction of labor unions and the deportation of immigrants. Because it looks into such issues, this thesis provides a critical perspective on periodical history that so many others have missed.

While this project provides an updated version of the First Red Scare period, it has also expanded upon many other crucial historical topics. It focuses on the critical role the media has played in this nation’s labor history. Many books investigate the history of confrontation between big business and labor unions, but very few examine the presence of the media in such conflict. Many historians have chosen not to review the fall 1919 strikes. This period developed the early seeds of the Civil Rights Movement and saw the establishment of the FBI. Since its legacy continues to affect Americans today, it is essential to study this era.

²⁵⁶ Roberts, *The Washington Post*, pp. x-xii.

²⁵⁷ Berges, *The Life and Times of Los Angeles*, pp. x-xii.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books and Articles

Ainsworth, Ed. *History of Los Angeles Times*. New York: The Pulitzer Publishing Company, 1942.

Anderson, Jervis. A. *Philip Randolph: A Biographical Portrait*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1972.

Barrett, James R. *William Z. Foster and the Tragedy of American Radicalism*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999.

Berges, Marshall. *The Life and Times of Los Angeles: A Newspaper, A Family, and A City*. New York: Atheneum, 1984.

Bookbinder, Bernie. *City of the World: New York and Its People*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1989.

Brissenden, Paul F. *The I.W.W.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1920.

Brody, David. *Labor in Crisis: The Steel Strike of 1919*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987.

Brooks, John G. *American Syndicalism: The I.W.W.* New York: The MacMillan Company, 1913.

Brown, Cliff. *Racial Conflict and Violence in the Labor Market: Roots in the 1919 Steel Strike*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1998.

Buni, Andrew. *Robert L. Vann of the Pittsburgh Courier: Politics and Black Journalism*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1974.

Burdett, Silver. *Samuel Gompers: Illustrious Americans*. Atlanta: Silver Burdett Company, 1967.

Calavita, Kitty. *U.S. Immigration Law and the Control of Labor, 1820-1924*. New York: Academic Press, Inc., 1984.

Chiasson, Lloyd. *The Press in Times of Crisis*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenword Press, 1995.

Clarke, E.Y. *Illustrated History of Atlanta*. Atlanta: Cherokee Publishing Company, 1910.

Coan, Blair. *The Red Web*. Chicago: Northwest Publishing Company, 1925.

Commons, John R. *History of Labor in the United States*. New York: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1966.

Curry, Richard, *Conspiracy: The Fear of Subversion in American History*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1955.

David, Elmer. *The History of the New York Times*. New York: J.J. Little and Ives Company, 1921.

Detweiler, Frederick G. *The Negro Press in the United States*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1922.

Dubofsky, Melvyn and Dulles, Foster R. *Labor in America: A History*. Wheeling, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1999.

Dubofsky, Melvyn. *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988.

Ellis, Mark. *Race, War, and Surveillance: African-Americans and the United States Government During World War I*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.

Emery, Edwin, and Emery, Michael. *The Press and America: An Interpretive History of the Mass Media*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon Publishers, 1996.

Factor, Robert L. *The Black Response to America*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1970.

Filene, Peter. *America View of Soviet Russia, 1917-1965*. Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1968.

Filippelli, Ronald L. *Labor Conflict in the United States: An Encyclopedia*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990.

Fogelson, Robert M. *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967.

Folglesong, David S. *America's Secret War Against Bolshevism*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995.

Philip S. Foner. *History of the Labor Movement in the United States: Labor and World War I, 1914-1918*. New York: International Publishers, 1987.

Philip S. Foner. *History of the Labor Movement in the United States: Postwar Struggles, 1918-1920*. New York: International Publishers, 1988.

Gerstle, Gary. "Liberty, Coercion, and the Making of Americans." *The Journal of American History* (September, 1997): pp. 550-575.

Ghent, W.J. *The Reds Bring Reaction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1923.

Goldfield, Michael. *The Decline of Organized Labor in the United States*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987.

Gramling, Oliver. *AP: The Story of News*. Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1969.

Green, Constance M. *Washington: Capital City, 1879-1950*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963.

Griffith, Louis T. and Talmadge, John E. *Georgia Journalism, 1763-1950*. Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1951.

Hanson, Ole. *Americanism vs. Bolshevism*. New York: Doubleday, Page, and Company, 1920.

Harris, Thomas E. *Analysis of the Clash Over the Issues Between Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1993.

Hart, Jack R. *The Information Empire: The Rise of Los Angeles Times and the Times Mirror Corporation*. Washington, D.C.: The University Press of America, 1981.

Higham, John. *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1983.

Horne, Gerald. *Black Liberation/Red Scare: Ben Davis and the Communist Party*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994.

Hoyt, Edwin P. *The Palmer Raids, 1919-1920: An Attempt to Suppress Dissent*. New York: The Seabury Press, 1969.

Jaffe, Julian E. *Crusade Against Radicalism: New York During the Red Scare*. Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1972.

Jordan, William G. *Black Newspapers and America's War for Democracy, 1914-1920*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

Jones, Alex S. and Tifft, Susan E. *The Trust: The Private and Powerful Family Behind the New York Times*. New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1999.

- Kennedy, David M. *Over Here: The First World War and American Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.
- Kinsley, Philip. *The Chicago Tribune: Its First Hundred Years*. Chicago: The Chicago Tribune, 1946.
- Korweibel Jr., Theodore. *"Investigate Everything:" Federal Efforts to Compel Black Loyalty During World War I*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002.
- Lee, James M. *History of American Journalism*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1917.
- Lens, Sidney. *The Labor Wars: From the Molly Maguires to the Sitdowns*. New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1973.
- Levy, Eugene. *James Weldon Johnson: Black Leader, Black Voice*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973.
- Lewis, David L. *W.E.B. Du Bois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century, 1919-1963*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000.
- Lewis, Pierce F. *New Orleans: The Making of an Urban Landscape*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1976.
- Longstreet, Stephen. *Chicago, 1860-1919*. New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1973.
- Mandel, Bernard. *Samuel Gompers: A Biography*. Yellow Springs, Ohio: The Antioch Press, 1963.
- McCartin, Joseph A. *Labor's Great War: The Struggle for Industrial Democracy and the Origins of Modern American Labor Relations, 1912-1921*. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1997.
- McConnell, Francis J. and Poling, Daniel A. *Public Opinion and the Steel Strike: Supplementary Reports of the Investigation to the Commission of Inquiry, The Interchurch World Movement*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1921.
- Miller, Sally M. *The Ethnic Press in the United States: A Historical Analysis and Handbook*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1987.
- Moore, Jacqueline. *Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and the Struggle for Racial Uplift*. Wilmington, Delaware: SR Books, 2003.

- Moses, Wilson J. *Creative Conflict in African-American Thought: Frederick Douglass, Alexander Crummell, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Marcus Garvey*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Mott, Frank L. *American Journalism: A History, 1690-1960*. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1962.
- Murfin, Patrick, and Thompson, Fred. *The I.W.W.: Its First Seventy Years, 1905-1975*. Ithaca, New York, Glad Day Press, 1976.
- Murray, Robert. *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1955.
- Park, Robert E. *The Immigrant Press and its Control*. New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1922.
- Perlman, Selig, and Taft, Philip. *History of Labor in the United States, 1896-1932*. New York: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1966.
- Pfaff, Daniel W. *Joseph Pulitzer II and the Post-Dispatch: A Newspaperman's Life*. University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991.
- Pfeffer, Paula F. *A. Philip Randolph: Pioneer of Civil Rights Movement*. Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1990.
- Preston, William. *Aliens and Dissenters: Federal Suppression of Radicals, 1903-1933*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963.
- Pride, Armistead S. *A History of the Black Press*. Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1997.
- Primm, James N. *Lion of the Valley: St. Louis, Missouri, 1764-1980*. St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1998.
- Record, Wilson. *The Negro and the Communist Party*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1951.
- Roberts, Chalmers M. *The Washington Post: The First 100 Years*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1977.
- Ross, Charles G. *The Story of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. St. Louis: The Pulitzer Publishing Company, 1962.
- Rudwick Elliott M. *W.E.B. Du Bois: A Study in Minority Group Leadership*. Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960.

Savage, Marion D. *Industrial Unionism in America: From Conspiracy to Collective Bargaining*. New York: Arno and the New York Times, 1971.

Schmidt, Regin. *Red Scare: FBI and the Origins of Anticommunism in the United States*. Copenhagen, Denmark: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2000.

Simmons, Charles. *The African-American Press: A History of News Coverage During National Crises, with Special Reference to Four Black Newspapers, 1827-1965*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, Inc., 1998.

Smith, Frederick W. *The Amazing Storm: Business Answers to the Labor Question, 1900-1920*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1986.

Somin, Ilya. *Stillborn Crusade: The Tragic Failure of Western Intervention in the Russian Civil War, 1918-1920*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1996.

Suggs, Henry L. *The Black Press in the South, 1865-1979*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1983.

Urofsky, Melvin I. *Big Steel and the Wilson Administration: A Study in Business-Government Relations*. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University, 1969.

Ware, Norman J. *The Labor Movement in the United States, 1860-1985: A Study in Democracy*. New York: Vintage Books, 1929.

Weinstein, James. *The Decline of Socialism in America, 1912-1925*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967.

Williams, Henry. *Black Response to the American Left, 1917-1929*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973.

Wintz, Cary D. *African-American Political Thought: 1869-1930*. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1996.

Wolseley, Roland. *The Black Press, U.S.A.* Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1971.

Yellen, Samuel. *American Labor Struggles: From Conspiracy to Collective Bargaining*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1936.

Newspapers and Magazines

American Federationist, 1919-1920.

Atlanta-Journal Constitution, 1919.

Chicago Defender, 1919.

Chicago Tribune, 1919.

Competitor, 1919-1920.

Crisis, 1919-1920.

Crusader, 1919-1920.

Independent, 1919.

Journal of Labor, 1919.

Labor Age, 1919.

Labor Review, 1918-1919.

Los Angeles Times, 1919.

Messenger, 1919-1920.

New Justice, 1919-1920.

New Orleans Times-Picayune, 1919.

New York Age, 1919.

New York Times, 1919.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 1919.

Savannah Morning News, 1919.

Washington Post, 1919.