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**Labor Relations – Authorized by the Secretary of War:  
The Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen and its Unique Contribution to the  
Great War Effort 1916-1918**

Manned powered flight was barely a decade old when it was recruited as a weapon of war. The construction of these early aero planes relied on wood and fabric. The Pacific Northwest provided the best possible wood for their framework and spars, the Sitka spruce. Labor unrest in the timber industry, spurred on by the radical union, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), also known as the “Wobblies”, severely impeded production of the much needed spruce. Numerous strikes and work stoppages in 1916-17 were the trademark tactics of the Wobbly organizers.

With the goal of meeting quotas for spruce lumber for the fledgling aircraft industry in the U.S., as well as Allied needs in Europe for aircraft for the Great War, the U.S. Army sent Brice P. Disque on a covert fact finding mission to the Pacific Northwest to assess the situation. Under Lt. Colonel Disque’s recommendation, the formation of a new union, including both the timber workers and the employers, was authorized by the Secretary of War, Newton Baker. The Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen (LLLL) was operated by the U.S. Army, with the intent of breaking the radical Wobbly hold on the industry. With the entry of the United States into World War I in April 1917, a new patriotic fervor swept over the nation and the Wobblies "transformed in the public mind from a nuisance into a subversive menace."<sup>1</sup> Colonel Disque

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1. Patrick Renshaw, “The IWW and the Red Scare 1917-24”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1918-19: From War to Peace (Oct. 1968), 65.

capitalized on this wave of negative sentiment and patriotic fervor with the LLLL membership oath and official publications produced for the rank and file. The U.S. Army's union was successful in breaking the hold of the radical Wobblies in the Northwest while achieving labor's goals through negotiations from a position of mixed governmental power and national pride.

The formation of the government sponsored union for the specific purpose of breaking the hold of the Industrial Workers of the World in the forests of the Pacific Northwest is unique in the history of labor relations. The controversy surrounding the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen combined the nation's fervor of patriotism and the U.S. Government's requirements for the war effort. The vitriolic rhetoric surrounding these issues from 1917-1919 continued to affect the historiography published in the decades following the end of the Great War.

### *"Spruce for the Air – Fir for the Sea"*

The importance of the Pacific Northwest lumber industry to the world-wide war effort predates the entry of the United States into World War I. The Sitka spruce, *Picea sitchensis*, is a timber resource that is native along the coasts of Northern California, Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, and Alaska. It was the most important of the numerous tree species for airplane construction. General Brice P. Disque best stated the reasons for preferring that material: "Sitka spruce, generally found in scattering clumps of trees in the forest of the Pacific Northwest, proved to be the best of all woods for airplane construction. It qualified better than any other wood in a combination of the necessary qualities of lightness, strength, and resiliency, long and tough fiber and would not splinter when struck by a rifle bullet."<sup>2</sup>

The Pacific Northwest was the primary supplier of aircraft-quality wood to Great Britain, France, and Italy. The Allied Powers requested spruce for their aircraft industry and shipments

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2. Gerald W. Williams, "The Spruce Production Division", *Forest History Today*, USDA Forest Service, (Spring 1999), 3.

from the Northwest began as early as 1916. However, the quotas for aircraft grade lumber were not being met due to agitation by union organizers in Oregon and Washington. This was a problem for the War Department. The need for wood and related materials in the early days of aviation was a key factor in the formation of the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen and the Spruce Production Division of the U.S. Army Signal Corps.

### ***Labor Unrest Fueled by “Wobblie” Agitation***

Formed in 1905 by a heterogeneous group of socialists and radical industrial unionists, the IWW intended first to supplant the conservative American Federation of Labor, and then to lead the working class, through revolutionary "direct action," to the millennium of Marxist "industrial democracy." It planned to combine the American working class, and eventually wage workers all over the world, into one big labor union with an industrial basis, a syndicalist philosophy, and a revolutionary aim. Historian Patrick Renshaw writes, "The revolution was to be achieved by a series of strikes, leading to a general strike, which would force the capitalists to capitulate. Thus the IWW was to be both the embryo of the new society and the revolutionary instrument for achieving it."<sup>3</sup> The beginning of the preamble of the IWW constitution, approved in 1905, is indicative of its perceived inflammatory nature, at least to employers of the early 1900s.

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace as long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things in life. . . . Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the earth and the machinery of production, and abolish the wage system.<sup>4</sup>

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3. Patrick Renshaw, "The IWW and the Red Scare 1917-24", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1918-19: From War to Peace (Oct. 1968), 64.

4. James Rowan, *The I.W.W. in the Lumber Industry*, Seattle: Lumber Workers Industrial Union, c.1918, Facsimile Reproduction 1969), preface.

By the time of World War I, however, the IWW had become primarily a union of migratory "hobo" workers -- the kind of workers most willing to sacrifice practical economic gains to revolutionary purity -- and not the "One Big Union" of all workers that its founders had intended.<sup>5</sup>

In a region still only a generation or two removed from frontier conditions and less than a generation removed from the great migration of big business lumber operations from the depleted Great Lakes timber lands to the Pacific Northwest, working conditions for loggers were primitive and harsh. "Crowded, ramshackle, and lice-infested logging camp barracks, cheap unpalatable food, dangerous outdoor work in all kinds of weather, and the unscrupulous assessments of private employment agencies, or "slave markets" as the IWW press called them, were only a few of the indignities a migratory logging camp worker had to face."<sup>6</sup> The life of a lumberjack was a hard one. Travelling from camp to camp for employment, they were required to carry their own bedding and supplies. These men became known as "Bindle Bums", owing to their worldly possessions carried with them.

The conditions in the lumber camps were described by Robert Tyler, quoting a Department of Labor study from 1915:

The bunkhouse was small and unventilated to the point, in the words of one investigator, "the sweaty, steamy odors ... would asphyxiate the uninitiated". The bedding crawled with bedbugs. One camp investigated found 80 men crowded into a crude barracks with no windows. The men pressed into tiny bunks and went to sleep "under groundhog conditions". A study of logging camps made in the winter of 1917-1918 found that half had no bathing facilities, half had only crude wooden bunks, and half were infested with

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5. Robert L. Tyler, "The United States Government as Union Organizer: The Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (Dec., 1960), 435.

6. Tyler, "The United States Government as Union Organizer, 436.

bedbugs. Employers blamed the loggers for the swarms of bedbugs and lice because loggers brought the pests in their filthy "bindles" or bedrolls."<sup>7</sup>

These conditions were ripe for a "workers movement" such as the Wobblies. The Wobblies set out to organize the lumber industry in the Northwest with the goals of better conditions for loggers in the camps and the eight hour work day. These demands were met with stiff resistance from the lumber barons. The migratory nature of the workers in the industry made it difficult to form a cohesive base membership for the IWW. The same conditions provided an expendable labor force for the lumber camp owners.

It was obvious that only "One Big Union" could successfully lock horns with the powerful Lumber Trust. The IWW maintained lumber workers' locals in the principal cities of the Northwest, and carried on its propaganda by holding meetings and distributing literature, but IWW propaganda and agitation alone did not account for the 1917 lumber strike. In 1916, a strong drive was made by the IWW to organize the lumber workers of the Northwest. It met with immediate success, and by the spring of 1917, thousands of lumber workers were recruited in the IWW. The rival Timber Workers union of the AFL represented only a diminishing sample of mill workers in the Puget Sound area during the same period. The government was more concerned with the powerful and representative IWW sponsored Lumber Workers Industrial Union No. 500 "because the IWW was officially considered a 'seditious' and 'outlaw' organization that the government had already set out to destroy."<sup>8</sup>

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7. Robert L. Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods: the I.W.W. in the Pacific Northwest* (Eugene: University of Oregon, 1967), 85. The vintage of this book, during the changing culture of the 1960s, is evident in many of the passages. The author's descriptions of the IWW and the LLLL are of special note.

8. Tyler, "The United States Government as Union Organizer, 440. The pro-union sentiments of this journal article are evident in statements like this. The use of pointed words in sentences such as this are found in most of the journal articles and books from the 1960s that were used in this research.

John Richardson points out in an article about the Everett Massacre of 1916 that the IWW was becoming a major problem for the Lumber Trust employers of the Pacific Northwest.

He describes the volatile situation:

"Popular fear of the IWW grew for reasons that went beyond the union's militant tactics and commitment to the marginal and disreputable. Its growth, in a network of local unions and in the list of successful strikes in which its members participated directly, paralleled the geographic spread of a nativism that linked anti-immigrant, but largely Catholic, sentiments with the menace of industrial laborers. The IWW became a psychological force seen as a threat to the moral necessity to preserve national unity through the protection of local community. The Wobbly was the rootless stranger whose potential for violence was stimulated when many gathered."<sup>9</sup>

On March 5, 1917, the Lumber Workers Industrial Union (LWIU), affiliated with the IWW, held its founding convention in Spokane, Washington. This union included both loggers and sawmill workers. The LWIU was a unit within the IWW and was formed to represent the lumber industry, separate from the original union, the Agricultural Workers Organization (AWO).<sup>10</sup>

The demands of the inaugural Spokane convention of the LWIU were as follows:

- An eight-hour day with no work on Sundays or holidays;
- Minimum wage \$60 per month plus board;
- Wholesome food in porcelain dishes, no overcrowding, sufficient kitchen help to keep the kitchen clean and sanitary;
- Sanitary sleeping quarters with no more than 12 men per bunkhouse; single spring beds and mattresses with good clean bedding to be furnished free by the company;

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9. John G. Richardson, "Mill Owners and Wobblies, the Event Structure of the Everett Massacre – 1916", *Social Science History* 33:2 (Summer 2009), 188.

10. Fred Thompson and Patrick Murfin, *the I.W.W.: Its First Seventy Years, 1905-1975* (Chicago: Industrial Workers of the World, 1976), 94. It is of note that this publication was produced by the IWW and is subject to critical scrutiny.

bunkhouse to be well lit and furnished with reading tables; dry room (a room to dry clothes), laundry room, and shower baths;

- Free hospital service;
- \$5 per day minimum for river drivers;
- Two paydays per month by bank check without discount;
- All men to be hired from the union hall; free transportation from place of hiring to place of job;
- No discrimination.<sup>11</sup>

On June 20, 1917, the Spokane-based Lumber Workers Industrial Union No. 500, IWW, formally began what would become a massive loggers' strike. The radical union called the strike in the midst of an epidemic of small, spontaneous strikes throughout the "short-log" region (the pine log region east of the Cascades). Within two weeks, logging operations in the Northwest would effectively cease. In another two weeks, the strike spread to western Washington as the AFL's Timber Workers Union joined in. The response, according to Tyler, was phenomenal. "In the Hoquiam region alone some 3,000 loggers and mill workers answered the call. Now the two unions were allied, even if uneasily. In Grays Harbor County shipyard workers called a sympathy strike."<sup>12</sup>

In August, in the context of World War I and the urgent need for lumber, Washington Governor Ernest Lister and the U.S. Secretary of War persuaded some logging firms to provide the eight-hour day, and by late August most loggers returned to work.<sup>13</sup> A government raid on

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11. Fred Thompson and Patrick Murfin, 114-116.

12. Tyler, *"Rebels of the Woods: the I.W.W. in the Pacific Northwest"*, 84.

13. Tyler, *"Rebels of the Woods: the I.W.W. in the Pacific Northwest"*, 85.

IWW offices had jailed many of the leadership under the auspices of the Espionage Act of 1917. Tyler describes the action: "In the meantime, sheriffs and Washington state policemen rounded up IWW strikers and agitators by the scores and detained them in specially built stockades in North Yakima, Pasco, Wenatchee, Cle Elum, and other towns."<sup>14</sup>

The union then announced that it would "take the strike to the job." It insisted that this new tactic meant neither defeat nor the formal end to the strike, but only a more telling way of striking. The strikers returned to their jobs in camps and mills, but they continued to harry their employers and to restrict production with work slowdowns and sabotage. Tyler describes how "they loafed, they pretended ignorance and stood idle when the least initiative was needed, they perpetrated 'accidents,' and they acted as though their eight-hour day demand had been won, quitting work after eight-hour stints. Exasperated foremen, of course, discharged the trouble-makers, but the foot-loose transients merely collected their wages and moved on to another job to repeat the tactics."<sup>15</sup> This "strike on the job" made IWW members relatively immune from arrest because they no longer were obvious strikers; they carried no placards and walked no picket lines. It also eased the strain on the IWW treasury, for "much against their will the companies were forced to run the commissary of the strike."<sup>16</sup> However surprised and encouraged the IWW may have been by its "graduation from street corner, soap box agitation to real power and leadership, it could not enjoy the pride of power for long."<sup>17</sup>

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14. Tyler, "The United States Government as Union Organizer", 437.

15. Tyler, "The United States Government as Union Organizer", 438.

16. Tyler, "The United States Government as Union Organizer", 438.

17. Tyler, "The United States Government as Union Organizer", 437.



*The US Army needs to break the strike – for many reasons*

The situation in the Northwest was far from being solved and the U.S. Army had reached a breaking point. At the height of the strike in the summer, spruce shipments had diminished to the vanishing point, and in September, after the IWW's nominal return to work, shipments had risen to only 2,600,000 feet of the monthly 10,000,000 feet required.<sup>18</sup> The production quotas were still not being met and the U.S. Government felt compelled to take decisive action.

Numerous attempts had been made by government commissions to deal with the labor situation in the northwestern lumber camps and mills, but the conferences closed without definite results. A 1918 article by economist Louis Wehle comments on the dilemma:

The situation is extremely complicated, presenting as it does, not only grievances of labor organizations affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, but also long-standing complaints of the International [sic] Workers of the World, a section of labor with which this commission was not well fitted to deal on account of its containing two high officials of the American Federation of Labor, with which the I. W. W. has often been on terms of hostility.<sup>19</sup>

The Secretary of War decided to try another approach. He asked a former U.S. Army Captain, Brice, P. Disque, to investigate the situation. On September 29, 1917, he was reinstated into the Army as a Lt. Colonel. He then proceeded to Portland, Oregon to investigate the inadequate procurement of spruce for the Division of Military Aeronautics of the War Department and met for the first time with several of the parties involved in the labor-management problem. Colonel Disque discovered chaos during his two-week inspection tour. The War Department's procurement officer in Portland operated futilely in the confusion with only one office assistant. When Colonel Disque was asked at a banquet what he considered to be

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18. Tyler, "The United States Government as Union Organizer", 441.

19. Louis B. Wehle, "Labor Problems in the United States During the War", *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (Feb., 1918), 41. This journal article was written during the height of the IWW "scare" and reflects the views of the nation on the radical agitation in the northwest.

the industry's chief problem, he replied without equivocation that the labor problem appeared to him the most bothersome and that the "IWW menace" could not be made the scapegoat. "During this inspection tour a lumberman suggested to Disque that 'some sort' of a patriotic organization be formed to win over the support of the workers for the government's production program."<sup>20</sup>

Harold M. Hyman's book, *Soldiers and Spruce: Origins of the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen*, published in 1963, is a singularly complete and balanced book about the people, events and outcomes of the period. Hyman points out that "up to this time [Oct/Nov 1917] Disque had looked upon the spruce problem primarily as a question of raising work efficiency, of securing improvements in sawing and felling techniques, and of increasing antiradical security activities."<sup>21</sup> It became evident to Disque that there were far greater problems in the Northwest to be dealt with. The government would not be able to meet its requirements only through military intervention in the troubled industry.

Colonel Disque travelled to the lumber camps and saw the conditions the workers were subjected to and was moved by their situation. These visits only reinforced Disque's view that only some type of relief to the workers would result in meeting his goals of increased production. Hyman relates some of Disque's comments:

Conditions in the worst camps turned Disque's stomach. "We could not eat it," he noted of a repellant, greasy stew that he and Parker were invited to share with loggers at one evening meal. Most bunkhouses would have failed to pass inspection standards of an extremely negligent Army company officer, he judged, and any Army medical man

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20. Tyler, "The United States Government as Union Organizer", 441. This is the first citation found that indicates the idea for the LLLL came from the employers. Patriotism is also brought into the picture to give the workers something to believe in other than the Wobblies.

21. Harold M. Hyman, "Soldiers and Spruce: Origins of the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen," (Los Angeles: Institute of Industrial Relations, UCLA, 1963), 109. Hyman's book is probably the most unbiased and complete account of the LLLL and Spruce Production Division. He relied heavily on General Disque's personal papers and correspondence which up to this time was unavailable to researchers. These papers are now held in the archives of the University of Oregon. The descriptions of meetings and correspondence are documented in footnotes.

‘would have exploded’ at the provisions at lumber camps for dealing with the effects of industrial accidents, communicable diseases, and common ailments.<sup>22</sup>

The situation in the lumber camps aside, the primary issue in the Army's eyes was the production of lumber. A solution was needed that would include both management conciliations to union organizer demands and a patriotic purpose for the workers in the woods. This new sense of patriotic urgency to help win the war would prove to be the driving force in breaking the stalemate, seen as out and out sedition, caused by the Wobblie agitators.

Through negotiations between the mill and kiln owners, the timber workers and various local government commission members, a plan was developed to bring in the U.S. Army to oversee the production of lumber and police the volatile labor disputes in Oregon and Washington. The meetings further laid the groundwork for the formation of a unique industry wide "company union" which would include both employers and workers in a common goal of supporting the U.S. war effort. The name of Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen was chosen, with emphasis on the "Legion" aspect, which separated this new idea from the term "Unionism".

Colonel Disque summed up his recommendations to the War Department in a report, dated November 27, 1917. In this two page memo, he evaluates the situation with the IWW and the need for a military presence in the Northwest to oversee the production of the strategic resources. Disque's views reflect the Wobblies' influence in the overall problem:

1. The activities of alien enemies and domestic agitators in Washington and Oregon have been responsible for a very material decrease in production of lumber required by the government in the conduct of the war. . . .
5. Aside from the dispute between organizations of the American Federation of Labor and the employers, there has been for several months a determined and increasing determination on the part of the representatives of the IWW to slow down production by

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22. Hyman, 109.

means that are unquestionably illegal. To some extent, this propaganda is inspired by a desire to injure the Government in its war preparations, but I believe this to be merely incidental and the general purpose is merely to destroy industry for the sake of destruction. I have in my files voluminous records from operators and secret service agents detailing accounts of violence and sabotage daily committed, which result in serious delays to practically all of the industries now concerned in producing aircraft materials. . . .

9. whatever the cause, the fact that the production of spruce and fir lumber urgently required by the War and Navy Departments in the prosecution of the war is being delayed seriously by this element. This spruce and fir lumber is material which the Government has contracted for and urgently requires, and for which we are constantly prodding contractors to expedite deliveries, and it is believed that the Government's interest in the product of such manufacturers is of sufficient importance to justify protecting their plants with such forces of the Government as are necessary.<sup>23</sup>

With authorization from the Secretary of War, Colonel Disque went forward with plans to create a division of the U.S. Army Signal Corps, the Spruce Production Division, to ensure the provision of the much needed spruce to the aircraft industry. In a letter published in the *History of the Spruce Production Division, United States Army and United States Spruce Production Corporation*, the new commander of the "Spruce Soldiers" described his immediate actions:

My mission was to increase the monthly production from three million to ten million feet at once. To a soldier, in time of war, any means that are necessary are justifiable.

The soldiers, after spending a quarantine period in Vancouver Barracks, where they were taught the rudiments of drill, some discipline, sanitation and patriotism, were distributed throughout the industry, and there was an immediate increase in production and the elimination of sedition, sabotage and unrest of labor in camps and mills.

Our next step was to bring home to the civilian laborers and the operators their vital connection with the Government's war effort. The Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen resulted, and grew to a strength of over 125,000 men, pledged to stand behind the nation. From the day the Loyal Legion was organized there has not been a single labor disturbance in the logging and lumber industry of the Pacific Northwest.<sup>24</sup>

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23. Brice P. Disque Papers. Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries, Seattle, Washington. "Disque Report to Washington, November 27, 1917", Scanned images of the primary documents relating to the LLLL and Spruce Production Division are held in this collection.

24. Cuthbert P. Stearns, *History of the Spruce Production Division, United States Army and United States Spruce Production Corporation*, Portland, OR: Press of Kilham Stationery & Printing Co., n.d. [c. 1920], 3. This publication was produced by a former Division officer, Cuthbert Stearns as a rebuttal to the congressional hearings

Secretary of War Newton Baker sent a telegram of authorization to Colonel Disque on November 23, 1917 giving him the green light for the formation of the Loyal League of Loggers and Lumbermen. The first local was established in Wheeler, Oregon, on November 30, 1917. For several months its principal task was recruiting members, and it fulfilled few labor union functions and made few changes in working conditions. The War Department allotted one hundred officers to Colonel Disque for the project, and these officers, under First Lieutenant Maurice E. Crumpacker of the Signal Corps, toured the camps and mills of eastern Washington and Oregon administering a loyalty pledge to workers and employers, a simple act which constituted "joining up."

In its infancy, the Loyal Legion in late 1917 and early 1918 was an organization that was loose and improvised, with Colonel Disque making most of the policy decisions in his headquarters at the Fort Vancouver barracks. Seven districts were established initially, and others were added later as Idaho and Eastern Washington were brought into the scope of the movement. The United States government achieved its goals with this unique excursion into the field of labor union organization. By the time of the Armistice, the Loyal Legion had recruited 120,000 members, including virtually everyone who had worked at all in the industry during the war months.

As the Legion grew, Colonel Disque, with the help of the Spruce Production Division, was able to achieve a number of significant accomplishments in the timber industry over the Legion's short lifetime during WWI. Robert Tyler states, "an impressive record of achievements: the eight-hour day, the marked improvement in working conditions, a system of inspection and

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after the war which targeted Disque's decisions and practices. This work is not to be considered as "Historiography" on the subject; it was produced specifically for political motives.

maintenance of reform, the restoration of morale, the diminishing of seditious and revolutionary sentiments among thousands of workers."<sup>25</sup>

The methods employed in the implementation of this new union were based on two main goals of the U.S. Army and Colonel Disque. First and foremost was the need for increased production of the strategic spruce, the driving force behind all efforts and activities of the Army in the Northwest. Secondly, and key to the success of the Legion, was to suppress and ultimately eliminate the interference of the IWW. The Wobblies were seen as subversive and anti-American by the government, and by painting them as pro-German through ultra-patriotic propaganda, the voice of the IWW would be "drowned out and its agitators sent scurrying for cover."<sup>26</sup>

***"Bombing Pro-Hunism Out of the Northwest Forests"***

The membership oath for the Loyal Legion was the first step in taking the industry back from the Wobblies. With the U.S. entry into the Great War, a wave of nationalistic patriotism and anti-German sentiment swept the country. The everyday vernacular of the citizens included words such as "Kaiser Bill" and "Hun"; even the German Shepherd dog became known as the Alsatian. This patriotic fervor was exploited by Colonel Disque in promoting the goals of the Legion as an avenue for workers to show their support for the nation. The membership oath was designed to instill a sense of loyalty toward the war effort and also to stamp out sedition (i.e., the Wobblies). Military officers were charged with signing up workers in the lumber camps and mills of the Northwest. The idea that they were backed up by armed soldiers in this effort did not escape the scrutiny of critics of the LLLL. "Everyone approached took the pledge at the peril of

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25. Tyler, "The United States Government as Union Organizer", 446.

26. Tyler, "The United States Government as Union Organizer", 443.

seeming unpatriotic and was furnished 'with a card and a badge of unique and attractive design.'"<sup>27</sup>

The text of the Loyal Legion oath is as follows:

**Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen**

**PLEDGE**

**Aviation Section, Signal Corps, U.S. Army**

**To The Secretary of War:**

I, the Undersigned, in consideration of being made a member of the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen, do hereby solemnly pledge my efforts during this war to the United States of America, and will support and defend this Country against enemies, both foreign and domestic.

I further agree, by these presents, to faithfully do my duty toward this Country by directing my best efforts in every way possible to the production of Logs of Lumber for the construction of Army Airplanes and Ships to be used against our common enemies. That I will stamp out any sedition or acts of hostility against the United States Government which may come within my knowledge, and I will do every act and thing which will in general aid in carrying this war to a successful conclusion.

Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 1917.<sup>28</sup>

The LLLL Monthly Bulletin became the masthead of the pro-war effort and was filled with anti-Wobbler articles. There is no other way to describe these writings other than blatant propaganda. This style was not unique to the Legion; the average citizen was continually exposed to this rhetoric from all forms of the media of the day. The monthly bulletins were made available to the membership for a fifty cent subscription. Production of this publication came under the responsibility of Lt. M. E. Crumpacker, the Army officer in charge of the LLLL.

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27. Edmond S. Meany, "Western Spruce and the War," *The Washington Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Oct., 1918), 257. Even in this 1918 journal article, the author makes a comment that casts the Army officers as heavy handed.

28 LLLL Monthly bulletin MAY 1918, Vol 1, No 3, p 16, Gerald W. Williams Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Corvallis, Oregon.

Articles by members and official memoranda were presented in a magazine format with patriotically themed covers, many in color. Issues are filled with anti-Wobblie news, accusing the IWW organizers of all kinds of seditious activities, impeding the war effort and aiding the enemy.

The purposes of the LLLL Bulletin are clear, to promote the goals of the government and to keep the rank and file member on its side. Some examples of the prose printed would make Joseph Goebbels blush, but they are all indicative of the ultra-patriotic nature of the Legion. One such example titled, "Weapon With Which Colonel Disque is Bombing Pro-Hunism Out of the Northwest Forests" appeared in the May 1918 edition of the LLLL bulletin:

"I am a new arm forged from our government's stupendous war factory. Although I have a carrying capacity far beyond seventy-five miles, I shall never bombard a church, nor murder women and children, or Easter worshipers. I do not call myself Kultur, nor the Right Hand of God, nor even the All-Highest. Although I am potentially more powerful than the arsenals of Essen or Dusseldorf or Skoda I do not ravish women nor make slaves of men. I am composed, May 18<sup>th</sup> of approximately 80,000 parts and each part has a soul and a heart and a conscience and a determination to do for our country what all the combined barbarities of all the ages could never do for Bill Hohenzollern – WIN THE WAR!

I am cleaning the Northwest forests of the foul traitors who spread the Kaiser's propaganda and hindered the progress of the war. I am aiding the loyal men of the Northwest, the big majority of loggers and millmen, to rid their ranks of enemies of our country. With their aid I am making sedition as scarce in this section as freedom is in Germany. I peer into hidden places and search out the secret schemes of whispering disloyalists; I turn a blighting blast of scorn and vengeance from my loyal members upon the vultures who fatten in our land while sowing seeds of discontent. When the full effect of my projectiles shall have thoroughly permeated the forests and cities and towns of the Northwest they will be as purged of treachery as the Kaiser is of conscience. I have pledged my honest word to the Secretary of War to aid in every way to win this war, and I am exactly what my name implies – the LOYAL LEGION OF LOGGERS AND LUMBERMEN.<sup>29</sup>

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29. LLLL Monthly bulletin MAY 1918, Vol 1, No 3, p 16, Gerald W. Williams Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Corvallis, Oregon. This article is just one of many pieces that indicate the nationalism and anti-German sentiments published in each of the LLLL bulletins.



The bulletins also published the various minutes and resolutions of the meetings of the Legion, keeping the membership up to date with Colonel Disque's vision for the organization. The "Objects of the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen" were approved by Disque and subsequently published in the bulletin. The main points of this document are all related to the patriotic goals of the organization:

1. To give every camp and mill worker and operator a chance to show his loyalty to the country of his birth or adoption, to the country which affords him opportunity and protection.
2. To aid this country in every way possible in this crisis, particularly by speeding up the production of spruce and fir for airplanes and ships.
3. To render first aid to the boys who are flying in France, by giving them aircraft that outclasses anything the Kaiser [the leader of Germany] can produce.
4. To urge upon each member the necessity of remaining constantly at the same local [locale] during this war. Changing jobs causes loss of time. Every day's work counts.
5. To always remember that a day's lay-off means a day's work for the German rulers who started the war.
6. To point out that in all history no set of men ever had as glorious an opportunity to aid the cause of human liberty as is now presented to the members of the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen.
7. To emphasize the fact that citizenship in our country places the duties of Government upon each of us.
8. To place the interests of our country above self interests.
9. To stamp out sedition and prevent sabotage.
10. To give all members an opportunity to present any suggestions touching conditions within locals to the Government.
11. To give the Government a chance to shows its appreciation to the members for their showing of loyalty.
12. To help make the world safe for democracy.

"A dozen axes in a Northwest forest can do more for humanity and civilization at this time than a regiment of rifles in France."

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR.  
Under Direction of Colonel Disque

M. E. Crumpacker  
Officer in Charge.<sup>30</sup>

The newly promoted Brigadier General Disque is quoted in a memo to a Spruce Division subordinate, illustrating the importance he placed on these publications and the membership oath. Disque writes, "Any attempt to nullify the purpose of the LLLL at this time must be considered as German propaganda."<sup>31</sup>

*Anti-LLLL Propaganda and Controversy*

The Army's union did not have the support of everyone in the Northwest. Pro-union organizers of the American Federation of Labor and their rival IWW did come to agreement on one thing -- the Loyal Legion was not the answer. Robert Tyler discusses the union position. "The IWW considered the prohibition of strikes in the Loyal Legion constitution its most objectionable provision, and one Wobbly writer sneered that the Loyal Legion left the workers with only the 'gift of gab' as a weapon."<sup>32</sup> The union organizers saw that they could not battle the patriotism of the Legion. Unions, especially the IWW were now seen in the Northwest as being against the U.S. war effort. Undoubtedly, the propaganda produced by the Legion publications was having a direct effect on the labor organizers' ability to regain a stronghold in the lumber industry. What better way to counter propaganda than to produce their own in opposition?

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30 LLLL Monthly bulletin MAY 1918, Vol 1, No 3, p 16, Gerald W. Williams Collection, Oregon State University Archives, Corvallis, Oregon.

31. Harold M. Hyman, "Soldiers and Spruce: Origins of the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen," (Los Angeles: Institute of Industrial Relations, UCLA, 1963), 289.

32. Robert L. Tyler, *Rebels of the Woods: the I.W.W. in the Pacific Northwest* (Eugene: University of Oregon, 1967), 111. The reproduction of this union sponsored pamphlet is undated. The referenced to the LLLL in the past tense indicates it was probably published immediately after the war.

In a post war publication, *The I.W.W. in the Lumber Industry*, probably printed in 1919 by the Lumber Workers Industrial Union (an IWW sponsored group), attacks on the U.S. Army and the LLLL were still being found. The author, James Rowan presents tirade after tirade about the situation during the war. This small pamphlet was distributed as pro-union propaganda in response to the successes of the Legion and General Disque. Two examples of unsubstantiated accusations are presented here:

In the meantime all the poisonous venom of the capitalist press was turned loose on the strikers. A campaign of lies, slander, and abuse, was daily carried on. Stories of the most absurd nature were circulated, in an attempt to turn public opinion against the strikers. Accusations were made that the strike was instigated and financed by German agents, to obstruct the U.S. Government in the conduct of the war, and to hinder the production of aero planes by stopping the production of spruce, and that \$100,000 a month was received at strike headquarters, from the Kaiser.<sup>33</sup>

The claim that the Kaiser was sending money to the IWW strike fund could possibly be found in the pages of the LLLL bulletins; however I was not able to locate the reference. Counter propaganda, published to an audience predisposed to believe the worst, was one of the tools used by the IWW in the post war years. A second example, equally vitriolic, directly attacks the officers in charge of the Loyal Legion.

With the purpose of breaking up and displacing the L.W.I.U., Colonel Disque started the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen. Recent investigations of its activities show that to the lumbermen the 4-L's meant Little Loyalty and Large Loot. Army officers, adept in terrorism, with no gentlemanly scruples to hold them from nefarious design, acted as organizers. Frequently they visited the camps, and all who refused to join the LLLL were accused of being spies, pro-Germans and traitors, and were usually fired off the job and beaten by soldiers. In one case a man who had the temerity to speak against the LLLL was found dead next morning, hanging from the limb of a tree.<sup>34</sup>

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33. James Rowan, *The I.W.W. in the Lumber Industry*, (Seattle: Lumber Workers Industrial Union, c.1918, Facsimile Reproduction 1969), 35.

34. Rowan, 53. This passage continues the theme of Army strong arm tactics, seen in many IWW writings.

Claims of strong arm tactics used by the Army to sign members was a common theme with the IWW leadership. It is hard to document instances of this due to most of the primary source materials being Army or LLLL related and do not show any misconduct. A search of local newspaper articles could possibly provide some type of proof. Accusations what they are, these two examples of Wobbly propaganda only illustrate the highly controversial nature of labor relations in the Northwest during the period. With a war raging in Europe, these battles of words paled in the overall scheme of events.

### *A Grain of Salt With Your Historiography?*

The vintage of historical accounts can illuminate much about an author's bias as well as the social climate in which it was written. Research into the turbulent times in our nation as it entered World War I needs to be conducted with a critical lens in many cases. The historiography of the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen and the Industrial Workers of the World has been written in basically two different social epochs of American history. Journal articles produced in the 1918-1925 period have a pronounced patriotic bent to them. Writing for the *Washington Historical Quarterly* in 1918, Edmond S. Meany allows an editorial style of writing history come forth; "War has grown wonderfully complex, as have all the other activities of man in this Twentieth Century. In this complexity success can neglect no element. This being true, there will be heroism in the Spruce forests, the shipyards, the munitions factories, on the transports and railroads, as well as in the air, in the Navy and at the battlefronts in Europe."<sup>35</sup>

In 1923 the memory of the Wobblies was still fresh with comments in the *Journal of Political Economy* by Edward Mittelman such as "The I.W.W. look upon the timber workers as 'capitalist tools' used to keep the workers in 'slavery.' The Timber workers look upon the I.W.W.

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35. Edmond S. Meany, "Western Spruce and the War," *The Washington Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Oct., 1918), 258.

as worse than scabs, for any one can quiet a scab, but no one can 'shut up' an I.W.W."<sup>36</sup> Scholarly works during the period have a certain *feel* to the writing, and facts are sometimes obscured in the prose.

The next major block of work on the subject was produced during the social upheaval of the 1960s. Although the most balanced, accurate account of the Legion was written by Hyman in 1963, other books and scholarly articles do not fare as well. The growing distrust of the government, new radical idealism and an anti-business/pro-union creeps into the writing of history. Statements are found such as: "First came intervention by the Army in the summer of 1917 to break I.W.W. strikes throughout the northwest. Such illegal and unconstitutional action by the military was but a temporary expedient."<sup>37</sup> The histories written during this period have that distinctive *feel* once again, only with a 1960s flavor. Granted, the historiography concerning the Legion and Wobblies covers a controversial subject, but care in the interpretation must be exercised.

### ***Conclusion***

The Great War had an effect on the entire planet, and the Pacific Northwest played a pivotal role in the United States' war effort. The war morphed the psyche of the American people from isolationist nativism in 1914 to a position of fervent patriotism by our entry into the war in 1917. This new patriotism would become an important tool used by General Brice P. Disque in the formation of the only U.S. Army operated "union" in history. General Disque capitalized on a nationwide distrust of the Wobblies, playing on the perceptions that they were a seditious, anti-

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36. Edward B. Mittelman, "The Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumberman — An Experiment in Industrial Relations," *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 31 (June 1923), 325.

37. John Braeman, "World War One and the Crisis of American Liberty", *American Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Spring, 1964).

American organization with the goals of overthrowing the capitalist system. He had a mission to accomplish from the U.S. Government and was not going to allow the IWW to stand in the way. By developing a sense of national pride and wartime urgency within the membership of the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen, Disque broke the Wobblies' influence in the timber industry. With the goals of meeting the nations' requirements for spruce lumber and solving the labor disputes spurred by the Industrial Workers of the World, a unique, if not dark chapter in U.S. labor history, played out in the coastal forests of Oregon and Washington.

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