
Bomb Explosion Blamed on IWW:

Many Fellow Workers Arrested and Held Following Explosion in Federal Building, Chicago, which Killed 4 and Injured Many [event of Sept. 4, 1918]

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On Wednesday afternoon, Sept. 4th [1918], shortly after 3 o'clock, a bomb exploded in the Adams Street entrance to the Federal Building which occupies a block between Clark and Dearborn Streets, Chicago.

This explosion killed four people and injured nearly 30 others more or less seriously. That portion of the post office was greatly damaged, and windows were broken for a block or more on both sides of Adams St. The concussion being of great strength, the noise of the explosion was heard and the shock felt at a considerable distance from the spot.

Following so closely upon the conviction and sentencing of our fellow workers here, the idea seemed immediately to take possession of federal, state, and city authorities that some members of the IWW were responsible for the outrage. Acting on that theory, the authorities on Wednesday afternoon arrested many of our fellow workers, including J.W. Wilson, Peter Stone, Matt Fox, Fred Hardy, William Chance, Jack Delany, Tiffany, Mrs. Wyman, Mrs. Andreytchine, and several others; some of whom were later released.

Since that time it appears that every effort has been made, particularly by state and city officials, to fasten the fearful crime upon the IWW. In this they have had the willing cooperation of all the big daily papers in the city and the Associated Press. First a statement is published as being given out authoritatively by State Attorney Hoyne that he has in custody — Harry Wilson, claimed by said attorney to

be a member of the IWW. Second, another statement follows, said to be given out from the city's detective bureau, that J.W. Wilson, described by them as private secretary to William D. Haywood, is beyond a doubt the guilty party and said detective bureau has all the proof needed to send him to the gallows. Third, the federal Bureau of Investigation is reported to have given out a statement that they have the case well in hand and will be able to give out the name of the man who committed the crime in a few days; at the same time disclaiming any knowledge of the work being done by state and city officials.

At the time of the explosion Fellow Worker Haywood was in the Federal Building in the office of the United States Marshal on the 8th floor. Wilson was there with him for a short time, but left about 2 o'clock. About 2:55 he was at the Mid-City Bank, corner of Halsted and Madison, where he cashed two checks. From there he drove in the Ford to the Randolph Hotel at the corner of Randolph and Wells St. He was driving east on Washington St. at 3:10, the time of the explosion.

Miss Elizabeth Service, bookkeeper for the organization, was in the marshal's office with Haywood at the time the explosion occurred. They felt the shock as it seemed to shake the entire building.

Within a few minutes after the bomb exploded, police and detectives were at the headquarters of the IWW. They detained all who were in the building at the time until Fellow Worker Wilson drove up in the Ford machine owned by the organization. They then released most of the others but hurried Wilson to the police station immediately.

During Wednesday evening and the following day the other fellow workers mentioned above were arrested and most of them have since been held incommunicado. It appears that some of them are in custody of the city and the balance being held by federal officers.

Harry Wilson, who, while not believed to be a member of the IWW has been active at times in collecting money for the defense of our class war prisoners, was arrested by the state officials on Thursday [Sept. 5, 1918] and the claim made through the newspapers that he was certainly the man who was wanted for the crime.

On Tuesday morning, Sept. 10th, Attorney Vanderveer made application for writs of habeas corpus before Judge Kavanaugh. The writs were granted but were made returnable on Sept. 23rd, thus leaving the fellow workers in custody until that date. However, lawyers for the defense were granted permission to see the prisoners.

Mrs. Wyman and Mrs. Andreytchine were released, the former having been held three days and the latter a few hours. Fellow Worker Wilson had been rooming at Mrs. Wyman's house.

Several other fellow workers, while not having been arrested or detained, have been taken to the city detective bureau and questioned as to their movements before and after the explosion.

It seems evident to all here that the whole effort on the part of the city and state officials is to fasten the crime upon some of the members of the IWW, and upon Fellow Worker Wilson in particular. What line of investigation is being pursued by the federal authorities it is impossible for us to guess. But we hope that a vigorous attempt is being made by the federals to bring to justice the party who is really guilty of this fiendish crime, whoever he may be. It is our sincere belief that the bomb thrower is not to be found in the ranks of the IWW. The actions of the city and state authorities make it seem to us that they are deliberately trying to frame the responsibility for this crime upon members of the IWW, and that they are careless of trying to pursue the investigation when the trial leads to any other source.

Looking at the matter from the standpoint of organization and defense work, nothing worse for us could have happened at this time. It was our intention, after filing appeals in behalf of our fellow workers who have been sentenced to Leavenworth, to make an attempt to get a number of them out on bonds pending the appeal. The explosion made it simply impossible for us to do anything further along this line at the present. There is no possible way in which it can be figured that such an act could benefit us. Any way one looks at it, one can see that nothing but harm could result to the organization and its membership here in Chicago particularly.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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