

struggles yet the battles it fights in defense of the poor and the helpless are but phases of the great movement which is making for the physical, the mental, and the moral uplift of the people. Behind and above the demand for higher wages and shorter hours stands the greater movement for better men, for happier women, and for joyous children; for homes, for books, for pictures and music, for the things that make for culture and refinement. The labor movement stands for the essential principles of religion and morality; for temperance; for decency, and for dignity.

Questions

1. What does Mitchell see as the purposes of the labor movement?
2. What would be necessary to establish "real industrial liberty" as understood by Mitchell?

86. The Industrial Workers of the World and the Free Speech Fights (1909)

Source: Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, "The Free-Speech Fight at Spokane," International Socialist Review, Vol. 16 (December 1909), pp. 483-89.

The most prominent union of the Progressive era, the American Federation of Labor, represented mainly the most privileged American workers—skilled industrial and craft laborers, nearly all of them white, male, and native born. In 1905, a group of unionists who rejected the AFL's exclusionary policies formed the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), which sought to mobilize the immigrant factory labor force, migrant timber and agricultural workers, women, blacks, and even the despised Chinese on the West Coast. The IWW played a role in some of the era's most renowned strikes, including those at Lawrence, Massachusetts, in 1912 and Paterson, New Jersey, the following year.

But what really attracted attention to the IWW was its battle for freedom of speech. Lacking union halls, its organizers relied on songs, street theater, impromptu organizing meetings, and street corner gatherings to spread their message and attract support. In response to IWW activities, officials in Los Angeles, Spokane, Denver, and more than a dozen other cities limited or prohibited outdoor meetings. To arouse popular support, the IWW filled the jails with members who defied local law by speaking in public. Sometimes, prisoners were brutally treated, as in Spokane, where three died and hundreds were hospitalized after being jailed for violating a local law requiring prior approval of the content of public speeches. In nearly all the free-speech fights, the IWW eventually forced local officials to give way. "Whether they agree or disagree with its methods or aims," wrote one journalist, "all lovers of liberty everywhere owe a debt to this organization for... [keeping] alight the fires of freedom."

THE WORKING CLASS of Spokane are engaged in a terrific conflict, one of the most vital of the local class struggles. It is a fight for more than free speech. It is to prevent the free press and labor's right to organize from being throttled. The writers of the associated press newspapers have lied about us systematically and unscrupulously. It is only through the medium of the Socialist and labor press that we can hope to reach the ear of the public.

The struggle was precipitated by the I.W.W. and it is still doing the active fighting, namely, going to jail. But the principles for which we are fighting have been endorsed by the Socialist Party and the Central Labor Council of the A.F. of L. [American Federation of Labor].

The I.W.W. in Spokane is composed of "floaters," men who drift from harvest fields to lumber camps from east to west. They are men without families and are fearless in defense of their rights but as they are not the "home guard" with permanent jobs, they are the type upon whom the employment agents prey. With alluring signs detailing what short hours and high wages men can get in various sections, usually far away, these leeches induce the floater to buy a

job, paying exorbitant rates, after which they are shipped out a thousand miles from nowhere. The working man finds no such job as he expected but one of a few days' duration until he is fired to make way for the next "easy mark."

The I.W.W. since its inception in the northwest has carried on a determined, relentless fight on the employment sharks and as a result the business of the latter has been seriously impaired. Judge Mann in the court a few days ago remarked: "I believe all this trouble is due to the employment agencies," and he certainly struck the nail on the head. "The I.W.W. must go," the sharks decreed last winter and a willing city council passed an ordinance forbidding all street meetings within the fire limits. This was practically a suppression of free speech because it stopped the I.W.W. from holding street meetings in the only districts where working men congregate. In August the Council modified their decision to allow religious bodies to speak on the streets, thus frankly admitting their discrimination against the I.W.W.

The I.W.W. decided that fall was the most advantageous time for the final conflict because the members of the organization drift back into town with their "stake" to tide them over the winter.

A test case was made about three weeks ago when Fellow Worker Thompson spoke on the street. At his trial on November 2nd the ordinance of August was declared unconstitutional by Judge Mann. He made a flowery speech in which he said that the right of free speech was "God given" and "inalienable," but with the consistency common to legal lights ruled that the *first ordinance* was now in vogue. Members of the Industrial Workers of the World thereupon went out on the street and spoke. They were all arrested and to our surprise the next morning were charged with disorderly conduct, which came under another ordinance. It looked as if the authorities hardly dared to fight it out on the ordinance forbidding free speech. From that time on, every day has witnessed the arrests of many members of the Industrial Workers of the World, Socialists and W.F. of M. [Western Federation of Miners] men.

On the third of November the headquarters of the I.W.W. was raided by Chief of Police Sullivan and his gang. They arrested James Wilson, editor of the *Industrial Worker*, James P. Thompson, local organizer, C. L. Filigno, local secretary, and A. E. Cousins, associate editor, on a charge of criminal conspiracy. E. J. Foote, acting editor of the *Industrial Worker*, was arrested out of the lawyer's office on the next day. The idea of the police was presumably to get "the leaders," as they are ignorant enough to suppose that by taking a few men they can cripple a great organization. The arrest of these men is serious, however, as they are charged with a state offense and are liable to be railroaded to the penitentiary for five years.

The condition of the city jail is such that it cannot be described in decent language. Sufficient to say, that the boys have been herded twenty-eight to thirty at a time in a 6 x 8 cell known as the sweat box. The steam has been turned on full blast until the men were ready to drop from exhaustion. Several have been known to faint before being removed. Then they were placed in an ice-cold cell and as a result of this inhuman treatment several are now in so precarious a condition that we fear they will die. After this preliminary punishment they were ordered to work on the rock pile and when they refused were placed on a diet of bread and water. Many of the boys, with a courage that is remarkable, refused even that. This is what the capitalist press sneeringly alluded to as a "hunger strike." The majority has been sentenced to thirty days. Those who repeated the terrible crime of saying "Fellow Workers" on the street corner were given thirty days, one hundred dollars' fine and costs. The trials have given additional proof to our much-disputed charge that justice in the United States is a farce. Fellow Worker Little was asked by the Judge what he was doing when arrested. He answered "reading the Declaration of Independence." "Thirty days," said the Judge. The next fellow worker had been reading extracts from the *Industrial Worker* and it was thirty days for him. We are a "classy" paper ranked with the Declaration of Independence as too incendiary for Spokane.

A case in point illustrates how "impartial" the court is. A woman from a notorious resort in this city which is across the street from the city hall and presumably operated under police protection appeared and complained against a colored soldier charged with disorderly conduct. The case was continued. The next case was an I.W.W. speaker. The Judge without any preliminaries asked "were you speaking on the street?" When the defendant replied "Yes" the Judge sternly ordered thirty days, one hundred dollars' fine and costs.

Fellow Worker Knust, one of our best speakers, was brutally beaten by an officer and he is at present in the hospital. Mrs. Frenette, one of our women members, was also struck by an officer. Some of the men inside the jail have black eyes and bruised faces. One man has a broken jaw, yet these men were not in such a condition when they were arrested.

Those serving sentence have been divided into three groups, one in the city jail, another in an old abandoned and partly wrecked schoolhouse and the third at Fort Wright, guarded by negro soldiers. These outrages are never featured in the local leading papers. It might be detrimental to the Washington Water Power-owned government. The usual lies about the agitators being ignorant foreigners, hoboes and vags [vagrants] are current. Assuming that most of those arrested were foreigners, which is not the case, there are 115 foreigners and 136 Americans, it would certainly reflect little credit on American citizens that outsiders have to do the fighting for what is guaranteed in the American constitution. Most of the boys have money. They are not what could be called "vags," although that would not be to their discredit, but they do not take their money to jail with them. They believe in leading a policeman not into temptation. They are intelligent, level-headed working men fighting for the rights of their class.

The situation assumed such serious proportions that a committee of the A.F. of L., the Socialist Party and the I.W.W. went before the

City Council requesting the repeal of the present ordinance and the passage of one providing for orderly meetings at reasonable hours. All of these committees, without qualification, endorsed free speech and made splendid talks before the Council. Two gentlemen appeared against us. One was an old soldier over 70 years of age with strong prejudices against the I.W.W. and the other president of the Fidelity National Bank of Spokane; yet these two presumably carried more weight than the twelve thousand five hundred citizens the three committees collectively represented. We were turned down absolutely and a motion was passed that no further action would be taken upon the present ordinance until requests came from the Mayor and Chief of Police. The Mayor, on the strength of this endorsement by a body of old fogies who made up all the mind they possess years ago, called upon the acting governor for the militia. His request was refused, however, and the acting governor is quoted as saying that he saw no disturbance.

The "Industrial Worker" appeared on time yesterday much to the chagrin and amazement of the authorities. Perhaps they now understand that every member in turn will take their place in the editorial chair before our paper will be suppressed.

The organization is growing by leaps and bounds. Men are coming in from all directions daily to go to jail that their organization may live.

Questions

1. Why was freedom of speech so important to labor organizations such as the IWW?
 2. What does the IWW's experience reveal about the status of civil liberties in early twentieth-century America?
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87. Margaret Sanger on "Free Motherhood," from *Woman and the New Race* (1920)

Source: Margaret Sanger, *Woman and the New Race* (New York, 1920), pp. 1, 47-48, 94-95, 226-32.

The word "feminism" entered the political vocabulary for the first time in the years before World War I. It expressed not only traditional demands such as the right to vote and greater economic opportunities for women, but also a quest for free sexual expression and reproductive choice as essential to women's emancipation. In the nineteenth century, the right to "control one's body" generally meant the ability to refuse sexual advances, including those of a woman's husband. Now, it suggested the ability to enjoy an active sexual life without necessarily bearing children. But the law banned not only the sale of birth control devices but even distributing information about them.

More than any other individual, Margaret Sanger, one of eleven children of an Irish-American working-class family, placed the issue of birth control at the heart of the new feminism. She began openly advertising birth control devices in her own journal, *The Woman Rebel*. "No woman can call herself free," she wrote, "who does not own and control her own body [and] can choose consciously whether she will or will not be a mother." In 1916, Sanger opened a clinic in a working-class neighborhood of Brooklyn and began distributing contraceptive devices to poor Jewish and Italian women, an action for which she was sentenced to a month in prison. Like the IWW free speech fights, Sanger's experience revealed how laws set rigid limits on Americans' freedom of expression.

THE MOST FAR-REACHING social development of modern times is the revolt of woman against sex servitude. The most important force in the remaking of the world is a free motherhood. Beside this force, the elaborate international programmes of modern statesmen are weak and superficial. Diplomats may formulate leagues of nations and nations may pledge their utmost strength to maintain them,

statesmen may dream of reconstructing the world out of alliances, hegemonies and spheres of influence, but woman, continuing to produce explosive populations, will convert these pledges into the proverbial scraps of paper; or she may, by controlling birth, lift motherhood to the plane of a voluntary, intelligent function, and remake the world. When the world is thus remade, it will exceed the dream of statesman, reformer and revolutionist.

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Most women who belong to the workers' families have no accurate or reliable knowledge of contraceptives, and are, therefore, bringing children into the world so rapidly that they, their families and their class are overwhelmed with numbers. Out of these numbers . . . have grown many of the burdens with which society in general is weighted; out of them have come, also, the want, disease, hard living conditions and general misery of the workers.

The women of this class are the greatest sufferers of all. Not only do they bear the material hardships and deprivations in common with the rest of the family, but in the case of the mother, these are intensified. It is the man and the child who have first call upon the insufficient amount of food. It is the man and the child who get the recreation, if there is any to be had, for the man's hours of labor are usually limited by law or by his labor union.

It is the woman who suffers first from hunger, the woman whose clothing is least adequate, the woman who must work all hours, even though she is not compelled, as in the case of millions, to go into a factory to add to her husband's scanty income. It is she, too, whose health breaks first and most hopelessly, under the long hours of work, the drain of frequent childbearing, and often almost constant nursing of babies. There are no eight-hour laws to protect the mother against overwork and toil in the home; no laws to protect her against ill health and the diseases of pregnancy and reproduction. In fact there has been almost no thought or consideration given for the protection of the mother in the home of the working-man.

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The basic freedom of the world is woman's freedom. A free race cannot be born of slave mothers. A woman enchained cannot choose but give a measure of that bondage to her sons and daughters. No woman can call herself free who does not own and control her body. No woman can call herself free until she can choose consciously whether she will or will not be a mother.

It does not greatly alter the case that some women call themselves free because they earn their own livings, while others profess freedom because they defy the conventions of sex relationship. She who earns her own living gains a sort of freedom that is not to be undervalued, but in quality and in quantity it is of little account beside the untrammled choice of mating or not mating, of being a mother or not being a mother. She gains food and clothing and shelter, at least, without submitting to the charity of her companion, but the earning of her own living does not give her the development of her inner sex urge, far deeper and more powerful in its outworkings than any of these externals. In order to have that development, she must still meet and solve the problem of motherhood.

With the so-called "free" woman, who chooses a mate in defiance of convention, freedom is largely a question of character and audacity. If she does attain to an unrestricted choice of a mate, she is still in a position to be enslaved through her reproductive powers. Indeed, the pressure of law and custom upon the woman not legally married is likely to make her more of a slave than the woman fortunate enough to marry the man of her choice.

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Voluntary motherhood implies a new morality—a vigorous, constructive, liberated morality. That morality will, first of all, prevent the submergence of womanhood into motherhood. It will set its face against the conversion of women into mechanical maternity and toward the creation of a new race.

Woman's role has been that of an incubator and little more. She has given birth to an incubated race. She has given to her children

what little she was permitted to give, but of herself, of her personality, almost nothing. In the mass, she has brought forth quantity, not quality. The requirement of a male dominated civilization has been numbers. She has met that requirement.

It is the essential function of voluntary motherhood to choose its own mate, to determine the time of childbearing and to regulate strictly the number of offspring. Natural affection upon her part, instead of selection dictated by social or economic advantage, will give her a better fatherhood for her children. The exercise of her right to decide how many children she will have and when she shall have them will procure for her the time necessary to the development of other faculties than that of reproduction. She will give play to her tastes, her talents and her ambitions. She will become a full-rounded human being.

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A free womanhood turns of its own desire to a free and happy motherhood, a motherhood which does not submerge the woman, but, which is enriched because she is unsubmerged. When we voice, then, the necessity of setting the feminine spirit utterly and absolutely free, thought turns naturally not to rights of the woman, nor indeed of the mother, but to the rights of the child—of all children in the world. For this is the miracle of free womanhood, that in its freedom it becomes the race mother and opens its heart in fruitful affection for humanity.

Questions

1. How does Sanger define "woman's freedom"?
2. How does Sanger believe access to birth control will change women's lives?

88. Woodrow Wilson and the New Freedom (1912)

Source: Arthur S. Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (69 vols.: 1966–94), Vol. 25, pp. 122–25. © 1978 Princeton University Press.

The four-way presidential contest of 1912 between President William Howard Taft, former president Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and Socialist Eugene V. Debs became a national debate on the relationship between political and economic freedom in the age of big business. Public attention focused particularly on the battle between Wilson, the Democratic candidate, and Roosevelt, running as the standard-bearer of the new Progressive Party, over the role of the federal government in securing economic freedom. Both believed increased government action necessary to preserve individual freedom, but they differed about the dangers of increasing the government's power and the inevitability of economic concentration. Roosevelt's program, which he called the New Nationalism, envisioned heavy taxes on personal and corporate fortunes, and federal regulation of industries including railroads, mining, and oil. Big business, he insisted, was here to stay and the federal government must protect the public interest.

Wilson called his own approach the New Freedom. He called for reinvigorating democracy by restoring market competition and freeing government from domination by big business. The New Freedom envisioned the federal government strengthening antitrust laws, protecting the right of workers to unionize, and actively encouraging small businesses—creating, in other words, the conditions for the renewal of economic competition without increasing government regulation of the economy. Wilson feared big government as much as the power of the corporations. "Liberty," he declared, "has never come from the government." He warned that corporations were as likely to corrupt government as to be managed by it, a forecast that proved remarkably accurate.

YOU HAVE IN this new party [the Progressive Party] two things—a political party and a body of social reformers. Will the political

party contained in it be serviceable to the social reformers? I do not think that I am mistaken in picking out as the political part of that platform the part which determines how the government is going to stand related to the central problems upon which its freedom depends. The freedom of the Government of the United States depends upon getting separated from, disentangled from, those interests which have enjoyed, chiefly enjoyed, the patronage of that government. Because the trouble with the tariff is not that it has been protective, for in recent years it has been much more than protective. It has been one of the most colossal systems of deliberate patronage that has ever been conceived. And the main trouble with it is that the protection stops where the patronage begins, and that if you could lop off the patronage, you would have taken away most of the objectionable features of the so-called protection.

This patronage, this special privilege, these favors doled out to some persons and not to all, have been the basis of the control which has been set up over the industries and over the enterprises of this country by great combinations. Because we forgot, in permitting a regime of free competition to last so long, that the competitors had ceased to be individuals or small groups of individuals, and it had come to be a competition between individuals or small groups on the one hand and enormous aggregations of individuals and capital on the other; and that, after that contrast in strength had been created in fact, competition, free competition, was out of the question, that it was then possible for the powerful to crush the weak.

That isn't competition; that is warfare. And because we did not check the free competition soon enough, because we did not check it at the point where pigmies entered the field against giants, we have created a condition of affairs in which the control of industry, and to a large extent the control of credit in this country, upon which industry feeds and in which all new enterprises must be rooted, is in the hands of a comparatively small and very compact body of men. These are the gentlemen who have in some instances,

perhaps in more than have been exhibited by legal proof, engaged in what we are now expected to call "unreasonable combinations in restraint of trade." They have indulged themselves beyond reason in the exercise of that power which makes competition practically impossible.

Very well then, the test of our freedom for the next generation lies here. Are we going to take that power away from them, or are we going to leave it with them? You can take it away from them if you regulate competition and make it impossible for them to do some of the things which they have been doing. You leave it with them if you legitimize and regulate monopoly. And what the platform of the new party proposes to do is exactly that.

It proposes to start where we are, and, without altering the established conditions of competition, which are conditions which affect it. We shall say what these giants shall do and to what the pigmies shall submit, and we shall do that not by law, for if you will read the plank in its candid statement—for it is perfectly candid—you will find that it rejects regulation by law and proposes a commission which shall have the discretion itself to undertake what the plank calls "constructive regulation." It shall make its rules as it goes along. As it handles these giants, so shall it shape its course. That, gentlemen, is nothing more than a legitimized continuation of the present order of things, with the alliance between the great interests and the government open instead of covert.

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Liberty has never come from the government. Liberty has always come from the subjects of the government. The history of liberty is a history of resistance. The history of liberty is a history of the limitation of governmental power, not the increase of it. Do these gentlemen dream that in the year 1912 we have discovered a unique exception to the movement of human history? Do they dream that the whole character of those who exercise power has changed, that it is no longer a temptation? Above all things else, do they dream

that men are bred great enough now to be a Providence over the people over whom they preside?

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[Theodore Roosevelt believes that] big business and the government could live on amicable terms with one another. . . .

Now, I say that in that way lies no thoroughfare for social reform, and that those who are hopeful of social reform through the instrumentality of that party ought to realize that in the very platform itself is supplied the demonstration that it is not a serviceable instrument. They do propose to serve civilization and humanity, but they can't serve civilization and humanity with that kind of government.

Questions

1. Why does Wilson say that "the history of liberty is a history of the limitation of governmental power"?
2. How does Wilson propose to protect "our freedom for the next generation"?