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The Colorado Coal Strike,  
1913-14

ON APRIL 21, 1914, in the quiet afternoon, a telephone linesman was making his way through the charred ruins of a miners' tent colony in southern Colorado. He lifted an iron cot covering a pit under one of the tents, and there he found the blackened, swollen bodies of eleven children and two women. The news was flashed swiftly to the world. The tragedy was given a name: the Ludlow Massacre.

Some Americans know about the Ludlow Massacre, though it does not appear in most of the history texts used in our schools and colleges. Woody Guthrie wrote a song about it, a dark, brooding song. But few know that the Ludlow Massacre was the central event in a fourteen-month strike of coal miners that took a toll of at least sixty-six lives—a strike which is one of the most dramatic and violent events in the history of this country.

Two governmental committees subsequently recorded over five thousand pages of firsthand testimony by participants in the Colorado coal strike. Thousands of newspaper stories and hundreds of magazine articles dealt with the conflict. Some of the most fascinating figures in American history were involved in some way in that event: Mother Jones and Eugene Debs, Woodrow Wilson, John D. Rockefeller and Ivy Lee, Upton Sinclair and John Reed.

Yet that story has been buried, in the way that labor struggles in general have been omitted or given brief mention in most mainstream accounts of the history of the United States. It deserves to be recalled, because embedded in the events of the Colorado strike are issues still alive today: the class struggle between owners of large enterprises and their workers, the special treatment of immigrant workers, the relationship between economic power and political power, the role of the press, and the way in which the culture censors out certain historical events.

The Colorado strike took place in a physical setting of vast proportions and staggering beauty. Down the center of the rectangle that is Colorado, from north to south, march an array of huge, breathtaking mountains—the Rockies—whose naked cliffs merge, on their eastern edge, with low hills covered with cedar and yellow pine. To the east of that is the plain—really a mile-high plateau—a tawny expanse of pasture grass sprinkled with prairie flowers in the spring and summer, and gleaming here and there with yellow-blossomed cactus.

Beneath the tremendous weight of the Rockies, in the course of countless centuries, decaying vegetation gradually mineralized into the black rock known as coal. The constantly increasing proportion of carbon in this rock transformed it from vegetable matter to peat, then to lignite and bituminous coal, and finally to anthracite.

Three great coalfields, consisting chiefly of bituminous coal, were formed in Colorado. One of them was contained within two counties in southern Colorado, Las Animas and Huerfano counties, just east of the mountains. This field was made up of about forty discontinuous seams, ranging from a few inches to fourteen feet thick. These seams were from two hundred and fifty to about five hundred feet deep.

The mining of these fields became possible on a large scale only in the 1870s, when the railroads moving west from Kansas City, south from Denver, and north from New Mexico, converged on the

region. At about this time, settlers moving down the old Santa Fe trail built a town on the banks of the Purgatory River (*el Rio de las Animas Perdidas Purgatorio*—the river of lost souls), just east of the Sangre de Cristo (blood of Christ) mountains and about fifteen miles north of the New Mexican border.

The town was called Trinidad, and it became the center of the southern mining area. By 1913 it had about ten thousand people—miners, ranchers, farmers, and businessmen. From the main highways and railroad lines leading north out of Trinidad, branch railways and old wagon roads cut sharply west into the foothills of the mountains, into the steep-walled canyons where the mining camps lay. Scattered in these narrow canyons, on the flat bands of earth running along the canyon bottoms, were the huts of the miners, the mine buildings, and the mine entries.

It was a shocking contrast: the wild beauty of the Colorado countryside against the unspeakable squalor of these mining camps. The miners' huts, usually shared by several families, were made of clapboard walls and thin-planked floors, with leaking roofs, sagging doors, broken windows, and layers of old newspapers nailed to the walls to keep out the cold. Some families, particularly Negro families, were forced to live in tiny squares not much bigger than chicken coops.

Within sight of the huts were the coke ovens and the mine tipples, where coal was emptied from the cars that carried it to the surface. Thick clouds of soot clogged the air and settled on the ground, strangling any shoots of grass or flowers that tried to grow there. Wriggling along the canyon wall, behind the huts, was a now sluggish creek, dirty yellow and laden with the slag of the mine and the refuse of the camp. Alongside the creek the children played, barefoot, ragged, and often hungry.

Each mining camp was a feudal dominion, with the company acting as lord and master. Every camp had a marshal, a law enforcement officer paid by the company. The "laws" were the company's rules. Curfews were imposed, "suspicious" strangers were not al-

lowed to visit the homes, the company store had a monopoly on goods sold in the camp. The doctor was a company doctor, the schoolteachers hired by the company.

In the early dawn, cages carried the men down into the blackness of the mine. There was usually a main tunnel, with dozens of branch tunnels leading into the "rooms," held up by timbers, where the miners hacked away at the face of the coal seam with hand picks and their helpers shoveled the coal into waiting railroad cars. The loaded cars were drawn along their tracks by mules to the main shaft, where they were lifted to the surface, and then to the top of the tippie, and then the coal showered down through the sorting screens into flatcars.

Since the average coal seam was about three feet high, the miners would often work on their knees or on their sides, never able to straighten up. The ventilation system was a crude affair that depended on the manipulation of tunnel doors by "trapper boys"—often thirteen or fourteen years old—who were being initiated into the work.

The first to labor in the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company's mines were Welshmen and Englishmen who had gained their experience in their mother countries. But with the great waves of immigration from southern Europe in the 1880s and 1890s, these were joined by Italians, Greeks, Poles, Hungarians, Montenegrins, and Serbs. There was also a large proportion of Mexicans and Negroes.

It was a man in charge of the "Sociological Department" of Colorado Fuel & Iron who described the mine bosses and camp officials this way: "At the bottom of the pit with pick and shovel the miner frequently found a grafting pit boss on his back. The camp superintendents as a whole impress me as most uncouth, ignorant, immoral, and in many instances the most brutal set of men that we have ever met. Blasphemous bullies."

Political power in Colorado rested in the hands of those who held economic power. This meant that the authority of Colorado

Fuel & Iron and the other mine operators was virtually supreme. A letter from company manager L. M. Bowers to the secretary of John D. Rockefeller Jr., written in May of 1913, describes the situation:

The Colorado Fuel & Iron Company for many years was accused of being the political dictator of southern Colorado, and in fact was a mighty power in the whole state. When I came here it was said that the C. F. & I. voted every man and woman in their employ without any regard to their being naturalized or not; and even their mules, it used to be remarked, were registered, if they were fortunate enough to possess names. . . . The company became notorious in many sections for their support of the liquor interests. They established saloons everywhere they possibly could. . . . A sheriff, elected by the votes of the C. F. & I. Co. employees . . . established himself or became a partner in sixteen liquor stores in our coal mines.

The Colorado attorney general who conducted an investigation in Huerfano County in the fall of 1913, on the eve of the strike, said, "I found a very perfect political machine, just as much a machine as Tammany in New York." Another letter, from Superintendent Bowers to Rockefeller shortly after the strike began, describes the cooperation of the bankers and the governor against the strike, and refers to Governor Ammons (a Democrat and a supporter of President Woodrow Wilson) as "our little cowboy governor."

Colorado's deputy labor commissioner, Edwin Brake, later testified before the House Mines and Mining subcommittee that investigated the strike, "It's very seldom you can convict anyone in Huerfano County if he's got any friends. Jeff Farr, the sheriff, selects the jury and they're picked to convict or acquit as the case may be."

A Reverend Atkinson, who interviewed Governor Ammons during the strike, asked the governor if there was constitutional law and government in Colorado, to which Ammons replied, "Not a bit in those counties where the coal mines are located."

Company officials were appointed as election judges. Company-dominated coroners and judges prevented injured employees from collecting damages. Polling places were often on company prop-

erty. J. C. Baldwin, gambler and bartender, was jury foreman in 80 percent of the cases tried in his county.

Much of the land on which these camps stood had been acquired under dubious circumstances under the provisions of the Desert Land Act, according to a report made in 1885 by the federal Land Commissioner.

In 1902, John D. Rockefeller Sr. bought control of the Colorado Fuel & Iron Corporation, the largest steel and coal producer in the West. The company produced 40 percent of the coal dug in Colorado. In 1911 he turned his interests in the corporation over to his son, John D. Rockefeller Jr., who decided major policy questions from his office at 26 Broadway in New York City. Actual management was handled in the Denver office of Jesse F. Welborn, chairman of the board of directors. By 1914 the company owned all the land in twenty-seven camps, including the houses, the saloons, the schools, the churches, and any other buildings within the camp environs.

From the very beginnings of the coal mine industry in Colorado, there was conflict between workers and management: an unsuccessful strike in 1876 (the very year Colorado was admitted to the Union), a successful strike in 1884 against a wage reduction. But the workday was still ten hours long, and in 1894 a strike for the eight-hour day failed.

The United Mine Workers of America was formed in 1890, "to unite in one organization, regardless of creed, color, or nationality, all workmen . . . employed in and around coal mines." The first United Mine Workers local in Colorado was formed in 1900, and three years later there was an eleven-month strike, broken by strikebreakers and the National Guard. Some of those strikebreakers became the strikers of 1913.

The top leadership of the U.M.W. was often criticized by more militant elements of the labor movement as being too conservative.

And while it was the United Mine Workers who led the strike in 1913-14, members of two other organizations were on the scene and had varying degrees of influence over the miners. These were the I.W.W. (Industrial Workers of the World) and the Socialist Party, which had locals in Trinidad and other Colorado cities.

The I.W.W. was formed in Chicago, in June of 1905, as a trade union organization with a revolutionary goal. "The working class and the employing class have nothing in common" was the first sentence in its preamble. It reached the peak of its power in the successful Lawrence, Massachusetts, textile strike of 1912. During the period 1910-13, some 60,000 workers held membership cards at various times, but the influence of the organization was far greater than its numbers. It was an incessant prod to the regular trade unions for more militant action.

Despite the fact that many miners voted either Progressive (for Theodore Roosevelt) or Socialist (for Eugene Debs) in the presidential election of 1912, most of the United Mine Workers leadership, including the union officials in Colorado, supported the Democratic Party. The biographer of John Lawson, who represented the union in Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah, wrote, "John Lawson and his miners were naïve on the subject of politics. They invariably regarded the Democratic Party as the champion of the downtrodden, a position that could not have been sustained had they had the experience to draw obvious conclusions from the party's record in the state."

In December of 1912, Lawson reported to the national executive board of the union on the necessity of organizing the southern field. Lawson and Frank Hayes, vice president of the union, set up headquarters in Trinidad in early 1913. They asked Governor Ammons to arrange a conference with the mine operators. The operators refused. They would do nothing to indicate a recognition of the union. Lawson and Hayes sent out a letter addressed to all miners in southern Colorado:

Greetings. This is the day of your emancipation. This is the day when liberty and progress come to abide in your midst. We call upon you this day to enroll as a member of the greatest and most powerful labor organization in the world, the United Mine Workers of America.

Organizers worked quietly in pairs, one outside the mines, one inside, and support for the union grew. Clandestine meetings were held in the countryside; picnics became an occasion for enlisting members. And on August 16, 1913, there took place the incident that heated the atmosphere dramatically and inexorably led to the strike. This was the shooting of Gerald Lippiatt, a thirty-two-year-old Italian-American organizer for the United Mine Workers, on the street in Trinidad.

There are many versions of what happened. The only details on which all witnesses agreed were that Lippiatt, who had just arrived in town, had walked down Commercial Street on a busy, noisy Saturday night; that he had encountered George Belcher and Walter Belk, of the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency and exchanged gunfire with Belcher; that Lippiatt had gotten off a shot that wounded Belcher in the leg; and that eight shots were fired at Lippiatt, four of which struck him. He died instantly.

Belcher and Belk were released on \$10,000 bond. A coroner's jury was formed of six Trinidad businessmen: the manager of the Wells-Fargo Express company, the cashier of the Trinidad National Bank, the president of the Sherman-Cosmer Mercantile Company, the manager of the Columbia Hotel, the proprietor of a chain of mercantile stores, and John C. Baldwin, gambler and saloon keeper, who acted as foreman.

The jury was told by William Daselli, a miner, that he had witnessed the shooting and had been the first to reach Lippiatt. Daselli said that Belk reached for his gun, Belcher pulled his gun and fired, and Lippiatt fell, then fired from the ground. The jury decided that it was a case of justifiable homicide.

Two days later, the scheduled convention of the State Federation of Labor took place in Trinidad. An empty chair, draped in black,

represented Lippiatt, and feeling ran high against the Baldwin-Felts Agency and against the mine operators, who had hired the agency in preparation for possible labor trouble.

Frank Hayes, tall and powerfully built, with flaming red hair, and considered one of the few really militant officials of the United Mine Workers board, addressed the convention:

If the Colorado mine owners, who have no regard for the miners union, could stand at the mouth of his mine some day when the black and swollen bodies of scores of his workmen are brought to the surface, as happened at Primero and other places in this state, and could hear the agonized cries of some mother, wife or child piteously begging that their loves ones be saved . . . they might then agree . . . that the miners union is justified in its demand for recognition.

On August 22 the delegates left the convention. Riding northward with them on the train was the coffin of Gerald Lippiatt. At Colorado Springs, Lippiatt was buried while a crowd of miners stood with heads bowed in the shadow of Pike's Peak and Lippiatt's fiancée wept quietly.

A letter from the U.M.W. policy committee was sent to fifty operators in southern Colorado asking for a conference. No reply came. Another letter invited the operators to a miners' convention to be held in Trinidad in mid-September. Again no reply.

Meanwhile, organizing was going on at a rapid rate. Miners from all the coal canyons in southern Colorado were being signed up as union members. Secret meetings were held in churches, at picnics, in abandoned workings hidden in the mountains. At hundreds of meetings, delegates were elected to represent the coal camps at the Trinidad convention.

At the same time, the mine operators were not idle. The Baldwin-Felts Agency began importing hundreds of men from the saloons and barrel-houses of Denver, and from points outside the state, to help break the impending strike. In Huerfano County, by the first of September, 326 men had been deputized by Sheriff Jeff Farr, all armed and paid by the coal companies.

On Monday, September 15, 1913, there was a parade of miners through the streets of Trinidad, and then the largest labor convention in Colorado history began its sessions. Two hundred and eighty delegates, representing every mine in Colorado as well as some in New Mexico and Utah, sat in the great opera house and sweated in the late summer heat.

For two days the convention's Scale and Policy Committee listened to the complaints of rank-and-file miners, who reported that they were being cheated to the tune of 400–800 pounds on each ton of coal; that the law allowing miners to elect checkweighmen of their own choice was being completely ignored; that they were paid in script worth ninety cents on the dollar (a violation of Colorado law); that the promise of an eight-hour day made by Colorado Fuel & Iron earlier that year had been ignored; that their wages could only be spent in company stores and saloons, where prices were from 25 to 40 percent higher; that they were forced to vote according to the wishes of the mine superintendent; that they were beaten and discharged for voicing complaints; and that armed guards conducted a reign of terror that kept the miners in subjection to the company.

A set of demands was adopted: recognition of the union was key, followed by the eight-hour day, wage increases, pay for "dead work" (laying tracks, shoring up the roof, etc.), elected checkweighmen, free choice of stores, boarding houses, and doctors, and the abolition of the guard system.

The operators claimed that the miners earned \$20 a week, but the Colorado Bureau of Labor Statistics put their average take-home pay at \$1.68 a day.

Perhaps what aroused the miners to rebellion more than anything was the refusal of the mine operators to spend money to insure the safety of the men as they worked hundreds of feet below the surface. There had been deadly explosions in the southern Colorado mines again and again. There were two primary causes for mine disasters: rotten timbers holding up the roofs of the caverns

where the miners dug their coal, and the accumulation of gas and dust in dry conditions under which the gas ignited easily.

The Colorado Fuel & Iron Company's Primero mine was sprinkled only when the dust became thick enough to prevent the passage of the mules. The miners had a saying that the operators would "rather kill a man than maim a mule." In 1907 an explosion at Primero had killed twenty-four men; three years later another explosion had killed seventy-nine. In response, Colorado Fuel & Iron official L. M. Bowers said that such accidents "will happen and we have to make the best of it. . . . Work will be resumed as soon as the miners get over the excitement."

In 1910 the Starkville mine, where the state labor commissioner had previously reported a failure to sprinkle, suffered a frightful explosion. Forty miners were killed; rescuers were kept out of the mine during daylight hours so as not to cause panic. A spokesman for Colorado Fuel & Iron insisted Starkville was nongaseous. Four weeks later, a mine at Delagua, this one belonging to the Victorian American company, also exploded, killing eighty-two.

By the time the labor convention took place in Trinidad on September 15, 1913, the grievances had accumulated. When Mother Jones dramatically appeared to address the delegates, they were ready to be aroused.

Mary Jones, whom the miners came to call Mother, was born Mary Harris in Ireland, where as a child she had seen British troops march through the streets with the heads of Irishmen stuck on their bayonets, and where her grandfather had been hanged during the fight for Irish freedom. Her family had emigrated to Canada, and Mary, then in her twenties, moved to Michigan and then to Memphis, working as a dressmaker and a schoolteacher. At thirty-one, she married an ironworker named George Jones, and they had four children.

In 1867, a yellow fever epidemic struck Memphis. All of Mary Jones's children and her husband died. At the age of thirty-seven

she left for Chicago, where she worked as a seamstress, later recalling, "Often while sewing for the lords and barons who lived in magnificent houses on the Lake Shore Drive, I would look out of the plate glass windows and see the poor, shivering wretches, jobless and hungry, walking alongside the frozen lake front."

She began attending meetings of the Knights of Labor, then the only national union that admitted women, and in the 1890s began organizing for the United Mine Workers. In 1903, with 100,000 miners on strike in Pennsylvania, including 16,000 children under age sixteen, she led a group of children on a twenty-two-day march to New York to confront President Theodore Roosevelt at his Oyster Bay home. She never found him there, but on the way she spoke at meetings of working people about child labor. In her autobiography she describes one of those meetings, near the Philadelphia city hall: "I put the little boys with their fingers off and hands crushed and maimed on a platform. I held up their mutilated hands and showed them to the crowd and made the statement that Philadelphia's mansions were built on the broken bones, the quivering hearts and drooping heads of these children."

Mother Jones was scathing in her denunciation of politicians, like the congressmen who passed legislation on behalf of the railroads but did nothing for working people. "I asked a man in prison once how he happened to get there. He had stolen a pair of shoes. I told him if he had stolen a railroad he could be a United States Senator." She was equally scornful of union leaders who compromised with employers, like United Mine Workers president John Mitchell. In her autobiography she wrote, "Mr. Mitchell died a rich man, distrusted by the working people whom he once served."

When the Colorado strike began, Mother Jones had just come from the coalfields of West Virginia. "Medieval West Virginia!" she called it later. "With its tent colonies on the bleak hills! With its grim men and women! When I get to the other side, I shall tell God Almighty about West Virginia!"

She stood on the platform in Trinidad that September of 1913 in a prim black dress embroidered with white lace, wisps of silvery hair curling around her forehead, a black bonnet on her head. She was five feet tall and weighed a hundred pounds. She addressed the delegates: "The question that arises today in the nation is an industrial oligarchy. . . . What would the coal in these mines and in these hills be worth unless you put your strength and muscle in to bring [it out]?"

She was an immigrant and had an instinctive understanding of the feelings of workers who had come from Italy, Poland, Greece, and other countries of southern and eastern Europe:

A reporter for a Pittsburgh paper was once out here and was speaking to a manager of one of the C. F. & I. mines. He asked why the place was not propped safely and the manager humanely replied: "Oh damn it, dagos are cheaper than props." I want to say there are no dagos in this country! It has been the game that has been played down the history of the ruling class to divide the working class.

Mother Jones had been on the platform in 1905 when the radical Industrial Workers of the World was formed. She had written articles for the *International Socialist Review*. But her revolutionary spirit was uniquely her own, and she gave no unconditional loyalty to any organization. She began by telling the Colorado workers about West Virginia.

Three thousand men assembled in Charlestown and we marched up with banners . . . and we walked into the state house grounds, for they are ours, and we have a right to take possession of them if we want to. . . . Now don't get on your knees. We have got no kings in America. Stand on both your feet with your head erect, said I, and present that document to the governor. . . . Don't wait, and don't say your honor, said I, because very few of those fellows have any honor and didn't know what it is! . . .

Sure we'll get in the bull pen. There is nothing about that. I was in jail. God Almighty, what if you do, you built the jail! I was jailed . . . and tried in Federal court and the old judge said: "Did you read my injunc-

tion?" I said I did. "Did you notice that that injunction told you not to look at the mines and did you look at them?" "Certainly," I said. "Why did you do it?" the judge said. "Because there was a judge bigger than you, and he gave me my eyesight, and I am going to look at whatever I want to."

The convention exploded with laughter and applause, and then grew quiet as Mother Jones said, "You have . . . created more wealth than they in a thousand years of the Roman Republic, and yet you have not any. . . . When I get Colorado, Kansas and Alabama organized, I will tell God Almighty to take me to my rest. But not until then!"

The convention voted unanimously to strike on September 23, and both sides intensified their preparations. The coal operators, under the leadership of Colorado Fuel & Iron, met at Colorado Springs, deciding to stand together and resist the union's demands.

With evictions of miners from the mining camps quickly under way, the U.M.W. leased land just outside the bounds of company property and ordered tents. Funds were made available by the union to meet the needs of the strikers.

On the day of the walkout 11,000 miners, about 90 percent of the workforce, gathered up their belongings and left their homes in the camps. As they did so, rain began to fall, turning to sleet and snow, but it did not stop the procession of pushcarts and mule wagons, piled high with furniture and personal possessions and tiny children. Wheels sank through the ice into the mud, but they moved on. A reporter for the *Denver Express* called it "an exodus of woe, of a people leaving known fears for new terrors, a hopeless people seeking new hope, a people born to suffering going forth to new suffering."

Mother Jones later recalled that twenty-eight wagon loads of personal belongings came into the Ludlow colony alone that day, on roads deep in mud, with the horses weary and mothers carrying tiny babies in their arms. Tents and mattresses were wet, and the children had to sleep on those mattresses that night.

A thousand additional tents that had supposedly been shipped from West Virginia had not arrived, and so in this colony and others many families huddled beneath makeshift shelters or under their wagons. Snow continued to fall for two days, and one observer wrote that "the elements seemed to be in league with the operators." It took four days before the tents arrived. By then the sun had appeared, the snows had melted, sanitary trenches and storage pits had been dug, stoves installed, tent floors timbered.

Ludlow was the largest miners' colony, set up at a railroad depot eighteen miles north of Trinidad on a direct line to Walsenburg, at the edge of Colorado Fuel & Iron property. Near the Ludlow depot there were a Greek bakery, a few saloons, a post office, a few stores. There were four hundred tents here, for a thousand people, over a quarter of whom were children. In the course of the strike, twenty-one babies were born in these tents.

At Ludlow a wooden stage was built for meetings, and a large tent was set up for use as a school and as a kind of community center. Committees were elected to arrange for sanitation and entertainment. Miners' colonies were also set up at Aguilar, Forbes, Sopris, Segundo, and Walsenburg.

The Ludlow encampment was described later by Major Edward Boughton, who was adjutant-general of the Colorado National Guard: "The colony numbered hundreds of people of whom only a few families were Americans. The rest were for the most part Greeks, Montenegrins, Bulgars, Servians, Italians, Mexicans, Tyroleans, Croatians, Austrians, Savoyards, and other aliens from the Southern countries of Europe." Twenty-two different languages were spoken in the colony.

Violence between strikers and company men began almost immediately, and it can't be said with certainty which side committed the first act. Throughout the months of the strike, acts of violence by one side were met with retaliation from the other. But surely it was not an even match. Miners with rifles were arrayed against not

only the machine guns of the Baldwin-Felts operatives but also the power of the state and its enforcers of "law and order." By the end of the strike, most of those dead and injured were miners and their families.

Near the Segundo railroad depot, five Greek strikers were doing some sabotage on a company-built footbridge across the Purgatory River when Bob Lee, chief guard at the Segundo coking plants and now a deputy sheriff, arrived. Lee was known to both miners and mine guards as a bully who victimized miners' wives as well as their husbands. Lee was on horseback, and as he rode towards the Greeks at the bridge he drew a rifle from the scabbard at the side of his saddle; but one of the Greeks fired first, the buckshot tearing into Lee's throat, killing him instantly.

The newly established U.S. Department of Labor tried to mediate between the U.M.W. and the mining operators, but the manager of Colorado Fuel & Iron, L. M. Bowers, distrusted the mediator, and wrote to Rockefeller that the companies would stand firm against the union until "our bones were bleached as white as chalk in these Rocky Mountains." Rockefeller replied that he agreed with this position. "Whatever the outcome we will stand by you to the end."

The Baldwin-Felts Agency constructed a special auto with a Gatling gun mounted on top, which became known as the Death Special. This auto, its sides armored, roamed the countryside with several agents carrying rifles in the front seat. On October 17, the Death Special attacked the tent colony at Forbes, killing one man and wounding two. A ten-year-old boy was left with nine bullets in his leg. In his book *Buried Unsung*, Zeese Papanikolas writes, "If there is anything that can account for the unconditional hatred the strikers would later show for the guards, for the panic that would sweep through those tents in waves throughout the rest of the strike, it is Forbes."

Meanwhile, hundreds of strikebreakers came into the area in a steady stream. They were deputized and paid \$3.50 a day plus ex-

penses. Wholesale arrests began. The sight of strikebreakers coming into the canyons aroused the strikers to fury. When they were intercepted, they were manhandled, once by a crowd of miners' wives and children. Buildings at the Primrose mine were dynamited. A gun battle took place between seventeen mounted mine guards and a group of strikers near the Ludlow colony. The operators told Governor Ammons that they had been attacked by "forty Greek and Montenegrin sharpshooters from the Balkan war."

Wholesale arrests of strikers continued. A few weeks after the start of the strike, forty-nine miners were marched to Trinidad between two rows of armed guards, with the Death Special crawling along to the rear, its guns trained on the strikers' backs. As the procession neared town, G. E. Jones, a member of the Western Federation of Miners, one of the founding unions of the I.W.W., tried to photograph the armed car. Albert C. Felts, manager of the Baldwin-Felts Agency, beat him senseless with the butt of his pistol while the deputies' rifles were trained on the man's body; then Jones was arrested for disturbing the peace.

Bowers reported to Rockefeller, "We are on top of a volcano. When men such as these [Department of Labor mediators], together with the cheap college professors and still cheaper writers in muck-raking magazines, supplemented by a lot of milk-and-water preachers . . . are permitted to assault the businessmen who have built up the great industries . . . it is time that vigorous measures are taken to put a stop to these vicious teachings."

Bowers also pointed to the threat to company's profits: "Our net earnings would have been the largest in the history of the company by \$200,000, but for the increase in wages paid the employees during the last few months. . . . It is mighty discouraging to have this vicious gang come into our state and not only destroy our profit but eat into that which has heretofore been saved."

On October 26, a steel-clad train manned by 190 guards with machine guns and rifles headed for the Ludlow colony. It was intercepted by a detachment of armed miners and turned back after a

pitched battle in which one mine guard was killed. The *New York Times* reported, "The situation is extremely critical tonight. More than 700 armed strikers are reported to be in the field against the mine guards." The use of the word "reported" suggested that the number had been exaggerated.

By the end of October there had been at least four battles between strikers and guards, and at least nine men had been killed. On October 28, Governor Ammons declared martial law. He also issued an order forbidding the import of strikebreakers from outside the state, but this was largely ignored.

The tent colonies were now in a state of siege, with machine guns and high-powered searchlights perched above them on inaccessible ridges, constantly aimed at the tents. The miners protested that their families could not sleep because of the glare, and the operators replied that if this was true they could pitch their tents farther from the coal properties.

Both sides were accumulating guns. Ethelbert Stewart, the Department of Labor's emissary and a man sympathetic to the miners, wrote to Washington, "If Caliban learns his master's language and uses it to curse him, the blame can not be all Caliban's. For Caliban will and must learn something, and the only language common to all, and which all understand in southern Colorado, is the voice of the gun."

On October 29, 1913, Governor Ammons ordered General John Chase, of the Colorado National Guard, to move his troops into the strike area. Chase was a Denver ophthalmologist, a gentleman farmer, and a church organizer, but when he put on his National Guard uniform he saw himself in noble battle with socialists and anarchists. He had missed serving in the Spanish American War and had dreams of military grandeur. The pressures on the governor to call out the Guard are spelled out in a letter from L. M. Bowers to Rockefeller's New York office: "You will be interested to know that we have been able to secure the cooperation of all the bankers of the city, who have had three or four interviews with our little

cowboy governor, agreeing to back the State and lend it all funds necessary to maintain the militia and afford ample protection so our miners could return to work."

Bowers's letter reveals a fundamental truth about labor struggles in American history—that powerful corporations have almost always found useful allies in the government and the press: "Besides the bankers, the chamber of commerce, the real estate exchange, together with a great many of the best business men, have been urging the governor to take steps to drive these vicious agitators out of the state. Another mighty power has been rounded up on behalf of the operators by the getting together of fourteen of the editors of the most important newspapers in the state."

The Colorado National Guard, under General Chase's command, consisted of two cavalry troops, two incomplete infantry regiments, one detachment of field artillery, a hospital corps, and a signal corps. The Guard had 14 horses at first, but bought 279 more; the mine owners paid for the keep of the horses. Six autos were used, two paid for by the operators. The enlisted personnel, according to an official report of the Adjutant-General's Office of Colorado, were mostly "small property-owners, clerks, professional men, farmers." There were about a thousand soldiers under Chase's command, although two thousand persons were on duty in the strike zone at various times.

The miners, having faced in the first five weeks of the strike what they considered a reign of terror at the hands of the private guards, now looked forward to the National Guard to "restore order." They did not know that the governor was sending these troops under pressure from the mine operators.

On the day before the Guard was due to arrive, several hundred miners camped at Ludlow put together their pennies and nickels to buy a large American flag, which flew the next morning over one of the strangest sights in Colorado history. Stretching for a mile along the road, from the tents of the Ludlow colony to the depot of the Colorado and Southern Railroad, were a thousand men, women,

and children. They had been starving slowly for the past month, and it showed in their gaunt faces, their tired bodies. But they were dressed in their Sunday best, the miners' children decked out in white, all waving little American flags, and shouting shrill welcomes in English, Greek, Italian, and a dozen other tongues. A newly improvised and pitifully discordant band, dressed in faded but still colorful Greek and Serbian army uniforms, played "The Union Forever."

From the railway station came the first troop of cavalry, led by General Chase himself on a prancing white stallion. In the dust kicked up by the horses' hooves rumbled a small detachment of field artillery. Then two regiments of infantrymen, marching precisely, in wide-brimmed hats and yellow leggings. They were commanded by Lieutenant Linderfelt, a stocky veteran of other wars. Men, women, and children shouted and sang until the last contingent had disappeared past the tent colony, down Berwind Canyon.

But soon the same people who had wept with relief at the sight of the National Guard were bitterly mourning their dead and praying for deliverance from what they called "cavemen dressed in khaki."

In the last months of 1913, a committee was set up by the State Federation of Labor to respond to a challenge from the governor to prove accusations of brutality against the Guard. The committee was headed by Professor James Brewster, of the University of Colorado law school. It heard from 163 witnesses, the testimony filling 760 typewritten pages, telling of soldiers assaulting women and children and torturing prisoners. The National Guard made 172 arrests that winter. Among the incidents described in the Brewster report were the following:

Mary Thomas, a Welsh woman, mother of two, five feet tall with long red hair, was held for three weeks in a vermin-ridden cell.

One of the arrested strikers was forced to sleep on an icy cement floor. He died after twenty-five days.

A nineteen-year-old girl, pregnant, was dragged through an alley by guardsmen in the night until she lost consciousness.

Mrs. Yankinski, a miner's wife, was at home with her four children when militiamen broke in and stole her money. Before they left, one kicked her little girl in the face, breaking her nose.

In the town of Segundo, a group of drunken guardsmen forced a group of children to march about the city for two hours, prodding them with bayonets to keep them moving.

Marco Zeni, a miner, was forced to stay awake in his cell for five days by soldiers who threw water in his face and jabbed him continually with bayonets.

A teen-age boy who had welcomed the National Guard, who had waved and sang as Lieutenant Karl Linderfelt led his infantry troops past the tents, was later attacked by the powerfully built officer, who came across the boy on a road near the strikers' colony and knocked him unconscious with his fists. At another point the lieutenant told a miner, "I am Jesus Christ, and my men on horses are Jesus Christs—and we must be obeyed."

Karl Linderfelt, who was to become known for his viciousness in the course of the strike, had served in the Philippine War of 1900-1901, a war in which Filipino civilians, including women and children, had been massacred. In many ways the Philippine War resembles the later war in Vietnam—with atrocities committed by American soldiers, "search and destroy" missions, the dismemberment of enemy dead. Linderfelt had served in the Northern Luzon area of the Philippines, where few prisoners were taken and villages were burned.

Lieutenant Linderfelt held a special hatred for one striker, Louis Tikas, the leader of the Ludlow colony. Tikas was twenty-seven years old when the strike began. He had arrived in the United States from Greece when he was twenty, just at the time when the owners of the steel mills and mines of the West, who had been importing black labor from the South, decided it would be more profitable to hire recently arrived immigrants, like the Greeks, who

might be intimidated by their new surroundings and would work for less.

Lou Tikas had had the benefit of a college education in Greece, and he was held in great affection by the miners. He was close to them in a way that John Lawson and other union officials could not be. One day at the end of November 1913, Lieutenant Linderfelt found Tikas alone and unarmed, beat him brutally, and had him dragged off to jail. John Lawson wired Governor Ammons: "We have reason to believe that it is Linderfelt's deliberate purpose to provoke the strikers to bloodshed. He has threatened to kill Louis Tikas."

In December of 1913, Lou Tikas and fifteen other prisoners of the Guard, among them Louis King, a black striker, lay in an ice-cold jail cell in Trinidad, with no charges yet brought against them. At this very time, Rockefeller was writing to his manager Bowers, "You are fighting a good fight, which is not only in the interest of your own company, but of other companies of Colorado and of the business interests of the entire country and of the laboring classes, quite as much."

One of the prisoners held with Tikas was another union organizer, Mike Livoda. Livoda was a Croatian who had come to America in 1903, worked in the Ohio steel mills, then headed west to the Colorado mines, where he became a U.M.W. organizer for three and a half dollars a day and expenses.

A month after Livoda arrived in Colorado, he had been taken into custody by four men who brought him to Jeff Farr, the notorious sheriff of Huerfano County. Farr asked his men, "Is that the son of a bitch?" He then told Livoda, "I'm king of this county. And if you want to do any of your dirty work you'll have to do it in Las Animas, not here." Livoda was put out on the railroad tracks and told to start walking. When he showed up in Huerfano County again, he was beaten, warned to get out of Colorado, and sent on his way. He walked for four hours into Walsenburg, where he

found refuge in the shop of a Jewish tailor. Then he continued his work.

On December 15, 1913, Livoda, Tikas, and the other prisoners were released from jail. Livoda said later, "You know, when a fellow is fighting for something good he doesn't mind, even if they send him to jail. That is how I felt while I was in that dark, stuffy cell, and I was so happy I just keeping singing union songs all the time."

All that fall, the miners had been committing acts of violence against company employees who remained on the job. In early November, strikebreaker Pedro Armijo was shot to death while passing near the tent colony at Aguilar, one of the largest towns in the mine area, inhabited mostly by union people. At about the same time, Herbert Smith, a mine clerk scabbing in a Colorado Fuel & Iron mine, was brutally beaten near Trinidad. Two days later, four mine guards were killed at Laved while escorting another scab.

That same month, George Belcher, the killer of U.M.W. organizer Gerald Lippiatt, was leaving a Trinidad drugstore and stopped on the corner to light a cigar. Hundreds of soldiers were in the square, plus fifty deputies and a number of detectives. As Belcher struck a match, a bullet from an unseen rifle entered the base of his brain, killing him instantly. Although several union men were arrested, no evidence was ever produced and the case went unsolved.

The miners were reacting not only to the killing of Lippiatt, which they had not forgotten, but also to the machine gun attacks on the tent colonies by the Baldwin-Felts agents, to the clandestine importation of strikebreakers, and to the depredations of the National Guard.

In the month of December 1913, Colorado experienced the worst snow seen in thirty years—forty-two inches fell on Denver. Colorado Fuel & Iron officials thought the storms might compel the miners to leave the tents for "the comfortable houses and employment at the mines," as they put it in one of their memos. But they

did not understand the miners. And it was this lack of comprehension, and their frustration at the miners' refusal to surrender even under horrendous conditions, that led the mine operators to escalate their attempts to break the strike. The governor became their instrument.

Early in December, Governor Ammons rescinded his original order forbidding strikebreakers to come in from outside the state. It had been ignored in any event, but now that it had been withdrawn the National Guard openly protected the strikebreakers, escorting them to the mines.

The railroad junction of Ludlow became a battleground. Black men from the South and recent immigrants from the Balkans were brought in. Often they were not told that a strike was on. The trains carrying them into the district often had the blinds drawn, the doors locked. As they got off the train they were jeered by people from the Ludlow tent colony—men, women, children—who were lined up at the depot. When found alone, strikebreakers were often beaten.

There were other kinds of encounters. Three black strikebreakers were captured, given food in the Ludlow colony, then released. Another day, strikers intercepted several Greeks at the Walsenburg depot, took them to the house of a miner in Walsenburg, made them a meal, and convinced them to support the union. But when their host, Kostas Markos, took them into town, they were surrounded by militiamen. Markos, who was carrying a gun, was beaten and thrown into jail. The Greeks were forced into a mine.

Kostas Markos was kept on the damp cement floor of a cell in the basement of the Walsenburg courthouse for twenty-two days. He was ill with rheumatism, but no doctor came to see him. Shortly after his release from prison he died. Later testimony before a subcommittee of the House Mines and Mining Committee appointed to determine whether federal laws were being violated in respect to peonage disclosed that "Salvatore Valentin, a Sicilian, told the committee that he had been brought from Pittsburgh through de-

ception and forced to work in the Delagua mine. One of his fellow strikebreakers, he said, was shot and killed in the mines by an unknown person."

Witnesses before the committee made dozens of accusations of peonage. Strikebreakers were deceived about the existence of a strike. At one point a contingent of workers from St. Louis disembarked from the train in Colorado and were surprised to find themselves "protected" by militiamen with unsheathed bayonets. At the end of January, fifty Bulgarians brought in to work at Tabasco Canyon who had been told there was no strike discovered otherwise. They evaded their guards and fled through the snow to the Ludlow colony, where Lou Tikas saw to it that they were fed, and, together with others who had made their way to Ludlow, brought into Trinidad to give affidavits to union attorneys.

Through all of this, the National Guard had its hands full trying to keep Mother Jones out of the strike area. General Chase had said, "She will be jailed immediately if she comes to Trinidad. I am not going to give her a chance to make any more speeches here. She is dangerous because she inflames the minds of the strikers."

On January 4, 1914, Mother Jones set out from Denver "to help my boys." She was then eighty-three years old. Arriving in Trinidad, she was immediately arrested and put on a train back to Denver. General Chase declared that if she returned to the strike zone she would be held incommunicado. She responded defiantly that she would return "when Colorado is made part of the United States." Speaking in Denver to union people she said, "I serve notice on the governor that this state doesn't belong to him—it belongs to the nation and I own a share of stock in it. Ammons or Chase either one can shoot me, but I will talk from the grave."

She left again for Trinidad on January 12, walking through the railroad yard to get on the train undetected by the detectives posted on the platform in the station. She got off at an unscheduled stop north of Trinidad, walked into town, and made her way to the Toltec Hotel. She spent three hours in her room, across the street from mi-

litia headquarters, before she was discovered. As a hundred and fifty militiamen surrounded the hotel, General Chase entered her room and took her into custody. She was taken to a hospital on the outskirts of Trinidad, where five guards kept a twenty-four-hour watch over her.

Mother Jones had been imprisoned for ten days when women began to arrive in Trinidad from all over the state, women who had heard her speak and been inspired. At one time she had told them,

This earth was made for you, was it not? And it was here a long time before the Colorado Fuel & Iron came upon it. When the C. F. & I. came upon this earth they did not get a mortgage on it, did they? No they did not. The earth was here long before they came, and it will be here when their rotten carcasses burn up in hell. . . . You will be free. Poverty and misery will be unknown. We will turn the jails into playgrounds for the children. We will build homes, and not dog kennels and shacks as you have them now. . . . You men and women will have to stand and fight.

Now they gathered a thousand strong at the train station to protest the jailing of Mother Jones. With an Italian woman carrying the American flag at the head of the parade, they began to march through the town.

They soon found their path blocked by National Guard cavalrymen, sabers drawn, led personally by General Chase, who pranced back and forth on his horse before the first rank of guardsmen. Chase called on the women to turn back, but they would not. Chase found a sixteen-year-old girl, Sarah Slater, in his path, and when she did not respond to his command he kicked at her with his stirrured foot. His horse bolted and Chase fell onto the street as the women jeered.

The general got back on his horse and shouted to his troops, "Ride down the women!" The cavalymen charged into the crowd, tearing banners and flags from the women's hands and swinging their sabers. Several women were slashed. A soldier brought his rifle butt down hard on Sarah Slater's toes. (General Chase said later that this was an effective method of mob control.)

Eighteen marchers were arrested. Mary Thomas, the diminutive Welsh mother of two, was not in the parade, but she had watched from the sidewalk and taunted the soldiers. She was dragged off and put in a cell along with her daughters, three and four years old. She told later how she sang to supporters gathered outside the jail until the police drove the crowd away. Mary Thomas and her children were kept in jail for three weeks.

Chase had so many prisoners by now that he set up a "military commission" to try the overload. The committee consisted of a Pueblo banker, a Denver physician, a manufacturer, an attorney, a businessman, and a Montrose real estate man. Major Edward Boughton, a Denver and Cripple Creek attorney, was made the commission's judge advocate.

Mother Jones was held incommunicado for ten weeks, with six soldiers guarding her day and night. She spoke later of having friendly conversations with some of them. Finally she was put on a train for Denver, guarded by a National Guard colonel.

The State Federation of Labor's Brewster committee, after hearing all the testimony about the brutality of the National Guard, addressed itself to the governor in early 1914: "We ask, sir, your solemn consideration of this question. How much longer will workmen continue to follow the Stars and Stripes when they repeatedly see the principles for which the Stars and Stripes have stood contemptuously disregarded by those in whose hands, for a time, lies might without right?"

The committee recommended that General Chase either resign or be removed; that three of the Guard officers, including Lieutenant Linderfelt, be suspended; that the private guards paid by the coal operators be discharged; that no workers be brought in under deception. The governor followed none of the recommendations, saying that the committee had heard only one side. There was truth to this, since guardsmen had not been permitted to testify before the committee.

February and March of 1914 were cold months and quiet ones. Only occasionally could a burst of gunfire be heard in the hills. But hunger and freezing temperatures plagued the miners and their families. As Zeese Papanikolas describes it,

Winter had hit hard at the people in the camps. . . . At Ludlow the paths worn between the tents and the privies or the coal piles or Snodgrass' little tin-sided store turned sludgy between the drifts of dirty snow or slicked over with ice. Water froze in the barrels outside the tents. When it stormed, gangs of men pulled the snow off the sagging tent roofs to keep them from crashing down. The men still went out with shovels and picks and a loop of wire looking for rabbits, but there were thirteen hundred mouths to feed in Ludlow alone and the game was getting pushed back deeper and deeper into the hills. The strike benefits never stretched far enough to fill the strikers' bellies. They were hungry in the camps, and they began to wear on one another. The women spent days huddled under their blankets with the children in the biting cold.

Papanikolas also observes, "In a certain subtle but elemental way the course of the strike had changed the real nature of the relations of women and men." The importance of the women in the family was never more evident. Not only were they out on the picket lines, often with their children, but they carried the coal and the water, did the cooking and the mending of clothes, held the families together.

As the strike wore on, the radical elements among the miners were active in maintaining morale, in bringing to the miners the larger implications of the strike—the class struggle going on in the United States and the world, the possibility of a better way of life. The Trinidad branch of the Socialist Party held meetings throughout the strike zone. A left-wing socialist, George Falconer, visited Colorado and reported that at a meeting of two hundred miners in Starkville, he and an Italian socialist named Amando Pelizzari were arrested. At Ludlow, over five hundred miners and their families gathered in the big tent to hear socialist speeches and take litera-

ture, while armed soldiers waited outside on the snow-clad plain. At a meeting in Aguilar, company soldiers surrounded the hall. In Walsenburg six hundred miners attended.

With the spring approaching, the mine operators began to listen to the incessant complaints of Governor Ammons. The state was heavily in debt to the bankers. Funds were running out for maintaining the National Guard. The payroll alone was \$30,000 a month, and critics pointed to the disproportionate number of officers in the guard—397 officers to 695 privates. As the state grew less and less able to pay salaries, the regular enlisted militia began to drop out. Taking the places of many of these men, wearing the same uniforms, were the mine guards of Colorado Fuel & Iron, still drawing pay from the company.

In early April of 1914, without warning, Governor Ammons recalled the bulk of the Colorado National Guard. Only thirty-five men in Company B, mostly former mine guards, were left. On April 18, a hundred deputies in the pay of Colorado Fuel & Iron were formed into Troop A of the National Guard and sent to join Company B. The designated spot: a rocky ridge overlooking the thousand men, women, and children who lived in the tent colony at Ludlow.

The two officers selected to take charge were Major Pat Hamrock, a local saloon keeper, and a man well known to the residents of Ludlow, Lieutenant Karl Linderfelt. Linderfelt's men in Troop A, according to a report to the governor by Major Boughton, were "superintendents, foremen, the clerical force, physicians, storekeepers, mine guards, and other residents of the coal camps."

On April 19, 1914, Easter Sunday for the Greek Orthodox Church, a group of the Ludlow strikers were picnicking in a nearby meadow. It was one of the first sunny days of spring, and they were playing baseball. Over the hill from the north came five gunmen on horseback, rifles slung over their shoulders. They stopped near the players, and one of them shouted, "Have your fun today! We'll have our roast tomorrow."

On Monday morning, April 20, the Ludlow colonists were still sleeping in their tents when the quiet of dawn was shaken by a violent explosion. Rushing from their tents, the strikers could see columns of black smoke rising slowly to the sky from the hill where the militia were stationed. Major Hamrock had exploded two dynamite bombs as a signal.

For a little while the countryside was unbearably still and tense. Then, at exactly 9:00 A.M., the dull clatter of a machine gun began and the first bullets ripped through the canvas of the tents. The clatter became a deafening roar as more machine guns went into action. One of the people who died was Frank Snyder. He was ten years old. His father told about it afterward: "The boy Frank was sitting on the floor . . . and he was in the act of stooping to kiss or caress his sister. . . . I was standing near the front door of my tent and I heard the impact of the bullet striking the boy's head and the crack . . . as it exploded inside of his brain."

Mingling with the gunfire were the wild cries of women as they ran from tent to tent, hugging children to their breasts, seeking shelter. Some managed to run off into the hills and hide in nearby ranch houses. Others crawled into the dark pits and caves which had been dug under a few of the tents.

Meanwhile, men were dashing away from the encampment to draw off the fire. They flung themselves into deep arroyos—dried-up streambeds. Now the high-powered rifles of the militiamen joined in and poured a hail of explosive bullets into the tents and into the arroyos. This continued all through the morning and into the afternoon, while men, women, and children huddled wherever they had found shelter, without food or water. At 4:30 P.M. a train from Trinidad brought more guards—and more machine guns.

Eyewitness Frank Didano reported, "The firing of the machine guns was awful. They fired thousands and thousands of shots. There were very few guns in the tent colony. Not over fifty, including shotguns. Women and children were afraid to crawl out of the shallow pits under the tents. Several men were killed trying to get to them.

The soldiers and mine guards tried to kill everybody; anything they saw move, even a dog, they shot at." Didano's estimate of the number of guns in the colony may not have been accurate, but certainly the miners' weapons were no match for what was coming to them. (All through the strike the operators had tried to spread the idea, often abetted by the press, that the miners had stockpiled large stores of ammunition and dynamite.)

That afternoon, the man the miners loved, Lou Tikas, was in the big tent, caring for women and children and aiding the wounded, when a telephone, its wires amazingly intact, started ringing. It was Lieutenant Linderfelt, up on the hill. He wanted to see Tikas—it was urgent. Tikas refused, hung up. The phone rang insistently—again and again. Tikas reconsidered. Perhaps he could stop the murder. He answered the phone. He would come.

Carrying a white flag, Tikas met Linderfelt on the hill. The lieutenant was surrounded by militiamen. The two talked. Suddenly Linderfelt, his face contorted with rage, raised his rifle and brought the stock down with all his strength on Tikas's skull. The rifle broke in two as the strike leader fell to the ground.

Godfrey Irwin, a young electrical engineer visiting Colorado with a friend, accidentally witnessed the scene from a nearby cliff. He later described the next few moments for the *New York World*: "Tikas fell face downward. As he lay there, we saw the militiamen fall back. Then they aimed their rifles and fired into the unconscious man's body. It was the first murder I had ever seen."

Two other strikers, unarmed and under guard, met their deaths on the hill in a similar manner.

As the sun lowered gradually behind the black hills, soldiers moved slowly down into the dark shadows alongside the tents. They were drenching the canvas with coal oil. The tents caught fire in rapid succession. Godfrey Irwin wrote,

We watched from our rock shelter while the militia dragged up their machine guns and poured a murderous fire into the arroyos from a

height by Water Tank Hill above the Ludlow depot. Then came the firing of the tents. I am positive that by no possible chance could they have been set ablaze accidentally. The militiamen were thick about the northern corner of the colony where the fire started, and we could see distinctly from our lofty observation place what looked like a blazing torch waved in the midst of the militia a few seconds before the general conflagration swept through the place.

While bullets whistled through the flaming canvas, people fled in panic from their tents and from the caves beneath. A dispatch to the *New York Times* read,

A seven-year-old girl dashed from under a blazing tent and heard the scream of bullets about her ears. Insane from fright, she ran into a tent again and fell into the hole with the remainder of her family to die with them. The child is said to have been a daughter of Charles Costa, a union leader at Aguilar, who perished with his wife and another child. . . .

James Fyler, financial secretary of the Trinidad local . . . died with a bullet in his forehead as he was attempting to rescue his wife from the flames. . . . Mrs. Marcelina Pedragon, her skirt ablaze, carried her youngest child from the flames, leaving two others behind.

And in another article the *Times* reported, "An unidentified man, driving a horse attached to a light buggy, dashed from the tents waving a white flag, just after the fire started. When ordered to halt he opened fire with a revolver and was killed by a return volley from the militia."

The tents became crackling torches, and for hours the countryside was aglow with a ghastly light while men, women, and children roamed like animals in the hills, seeking their loved ones. At 8:30 P.M. the militia "captured" the smoldering pile of ashes that now was Ludlow.

It was on the following day, April 21, that the bodies of the women and children were found in the pit beneath the tent.

The *New York Times* headline read, "WOMEN AND CHILDREN

ROASTED IN PITS OF TENT COLONY AS FLAMES DESTROY IT. MINERS STORE OF AMMUNITION AND DYNAMITE EXPLODED, SCATTERING DEATH AND RUIN." It was clear that the tent colony had been set aflame by the National Guard, but the paper was claiming, as has so often happened, that it was the victims who were responsible for the disaster.

A seemingly endless stream of men and women filed past the rows of coffins which filled the morgue in Trinidad. For Lou Tikas, there was a separate funeral. Thousands stood in the streets and wept. A few blocks from the morgue, in a windowless room in a cheap boardinghouse, Mary Pedragon stared at the walls, her mind gone. The two children she had not been able to carry had died in the pit.

The *Rocky Mountain News*, heretofore a fairly conservative newspaper, wrote,

Out of this infamy one fact stands clear. Machine guns did the murder. . . . It was private war, with the wealth of the richest man in the world behind the armed guards. The blood of the women and children, burned and shot like rats, cries aloud from the ground. The great state of Colorado has failed them. It has betrayed them. Her militia, which should have been the impartial protectors of the peace, have acted as murderous gunmen. . . . Explosive bullets have been used on children. Does the bloodiest page in the French Revolution approach this in hideousness?

The *New York Times* adopted a somewhat different approach. It seemed to be angry, not so much at the horrible acts that had been perpetrated during the massacre, but at the fact that the militia and the authorities had been stupid enough to create a situation on which the strikers might capitalize to their advantage. A *Times* editorial read,

Somebody blundered. Worse than the order that sent the Light Brigade into the jaws of death, worse in its effect than the Black Hole of Calcutta, was the order that trained the machine guns of the state mili-

tia of Colorado upon the strikers' camp at Ludlow, burned its tents, and suffocated to death the scores of women and children who had taken refuge in the rifle pits and trenches. . . . Strike organizers cannot escape full measure of blame for the labor war. . . . But no situation can justify the acts of a militia that compels women and babes to lie in ditches and cellars twenty four hours without food or water, exposes them to cannon and rifle fire, and lets them die like trapped animals in the flames of their camp. . . . [The workers] are now nerved to take this citadel [the doctrine of the right to work] by storm. They used violence against this doctrine. But when a sovereign State employs such horrible means, what may not be expected from the anarchy that ensues?

Funerals continued in Trinidad, and great memorial meetings. Families of the victims spoke and wept, and demanded redress, and the crowds wept with them.

Now a thousand miners turned from the coffins of the dead, took up their guns, and set out together for the back country. They were joined by union miners from a dozen neighboring camps, who left wives and children behind and swarmed over the hills, carrying arms and ammunition. They swept across the coal country, from Dalagua to Rouse, leaving in their wake the ashes of burned tipples, the rubble of dynamited mines, and the corpses of strikebreakers and militiamen.

Now, with the miners taking up arms against the militia, the *New York Times* editorialized, "With the deadliest weapons of civilization in the hands of savage-minded men, there can be no telling to what lengths the war in Colorado will go unless it is quelled by force. The President should turn his attention from Mexico long enough to take stern measures in Colorado."

The *Times* was referring to increasing tensions between Mexico and the United States, a situation that had been unfolding and came to a crisis point on the day of the massacre at Ludlow.

After taking half of Mexican territory in the Mexican War of

1846-48, the United States had remained strongly interested in the internal affairs of that country, as American investments, especially in Mexican oil, grew over the years. By 1913, these investments totaled a billion dollars, more than those of all other nations combined. William Randolph Hearst, in addition to his interest in oil, had inherited huge amounts of land in Mexico, and had become a powerful voice for U.S. interference in Mexican politics to protect these investments.

There was a new Mexican president in 1913, Victoriano Huerta, who had deposed his populist predecessor, Francisco Madero, in a bloody coup. President Woodrow Wilson refused to recognize Huerta, which was attributed by some observers to Wilson's abhorrence for dictatorship, by others to a desire for a more stable government that could preserve U.S. business interests. Wilson became more and more aggressive towards Huerta, demanding his resignation and allowing war materials to flow to Huerta's political opponents.

Wilson's language was the language of idealism ("Morality and not expediency is the thing that must guide us") but his actions were more in accord with the oil interests, one of whose spokesmen in the Senate declared, "I think those hearing me will live to see the Mexican border pushed to the Panama Canal." As the tension grew between Huerta and the United States, on April 9, 1914, the crew of an American naval vessel loading supplies at the Mexican port of Tampico was arrested, charged with violating martial law.

The sailors were released shortly, with an apology, but the commander of the American fleet demanded a formal apology, punishment of the responsible officer, and "that you publicly hoist the American flag in a prominent position on shore and salute it with twenty-one guns, which salute will be duly returned by this ship."

The Mexican foreign minister, Portillo y Rojas, announced that Mexico would exchange salutes with the United States, and would even salute first, but could not salute unconditionally. The officer

who had arrested the American servicemen was under arrest, Rojas said, and the Americans had been freed even before an investigation. "Mexico has yielded as much as her dignity will permit. Mexico trusts to the fairmindedness and spirit of justice of the American people."

That trust turned out not to be justified. President Wilson declared that unless the Mexican president acted before 6 P.M. on Sunday, April 19, he would take the situation to Congress for further action. Meanwhile, 22,000 men and fifty-two ships were ready. It seemed that long before the Tampico incident, plans for intervention in Mexico had been prepared. The *Times* reported, "CAMPAIGN WORKED OUT BY NAVAL EXPERTS IN RECENT MONTHS NOW BEING CARRIED OUT IN DETAIL."

On April 20, Wilson sent a message to Congress asking for the right to use armed force: "There can in what we do be no thought of aggression or selfish aggrandizement. We seek to maintain the dignity and authority of the United States only because we wish always to keep our great influence unimpaired for the uses of liberty, both in the United States, and wherever else it may be employed for the benefit of mankind."

Wilson's idealistic words were typical of his presidency. In the next several years he would send American troops to occupy Haiti and the Dominican Republic, again claiming it was for "the uses of liberty . . . the benefit of mankind." In fact, U.S. business interests required stability in those countries, which could be guaranteed by the presence of American marines.

The *Times*, in its editorial on the Mexican situation, said,

The President asked of Congress yesterday authority not to make war upon Mexico in the full sense of the word, but to apply coercive pressure to Huerta with intent to force his compliance with our just demands.

Just as when we went to war with Spain there were those who insisted that we should ignore the destruction of the *Maine* . . . so there

are now those who hold that Huerta is in the right and that he has given us no cause of offense. As to that, we may trust the just mind, the sound judgment, and the peaceful temper of President Wilson.

There is not the slightest occasion for popular excitement over the Mexican affair; there is no reason why anybody should get nervous either about the stock market or about his business.

American naval guns then proceeded to bomb Vera Cruz, and ten boatloads of marines landed. Over a hundred Mexicans were killed, the press announced.

The feelings of one section of the population were clear. As the *Times* reported, "The five hundred or more business men who attended the luncheon of the Members Council of the Merchants Association of New York jumped to their feet yesterday when William C. Breed, the toastmaster, called upon those present to express their loyalty to President Wilson 'to whatever course he shall determine necessary to restore peace, order, and a stable government in the Republic of Mexico.'"

But the miners of Colorado, with their nation facing such a critical question, with National Guardsmen needed to patrol the borders of Mexico, took a dim view of the "police action" and of the calls upon their "patriotism." They were influenced in this by two factors: the horror they had just been through, inflicted upon them not by any foreign tyranny but by the private business interests and armed forces of their own government; and the ideology of the radical and antiwar movements in the United States.

Here was the radical viewpoint toward the Mexican situation, expressed in the socialist press and at meetings throughout the country: the United States had gone into Mexico to protect Rockefeller's oil and William Randolph Hearst's ranches: "The wars in Mexico and Colorado are both Standard Oil wars" (*International Socialist Review*, June 1914). We have no country, radicals said—all workers are our countrymen—the only foreigner is the capitalist. In this view, the former Mexican president, Porfirio Diaz, had

avored British oil interests rather than Rockefeller's, Francisco Madero had been used by Rockefeller to regain control of Mexico's oil, and Wilson was a puppet of Rockefeller.

The Women's Peace Association in Denver said, "While Colorado is disgracing herself in the eyes of the world, the man who is responsible for the disgrace sits in his office in New York City. He is John D. Rockefeller, Jr." A meeting of women at Cooper Union in New York denounced Rockefeller and condemned the landing of troops at Vera Cruz. The New York executive committee of the Socialist Party asked Wilson to recall forces from Mexico and protect the Colorado miners.

A week after the Ludlow Massacre, a *Times* editorial hit out at two clergymen, the Reverend Percy Stickney Grant of Manhattan, and the Reverend John Howard Melish of Brooklyn, who had denounced from their pulpits the actions of the National Guard against the strikers. The *Times* said, "These are sympathetic utterances [the sermons of Grant and Melish] and differ from . . . cold impartiality. . . . There are those who think that infamy in Colorado consists in the fact that the militia are shooting workers. It may be contended that there is something like infamy in the opposition of workers to society and order. The militia are as impersonal and impartial as the law."

During this whole period, the *New York Times* published only one letter to the editor concerning the strike. It should be taken into consideration that any major event brings hundreds of letters to the newspapers, and that the selection of these letters reflects, in strong measure, editorial policy. This one letter was signed "W. C. C." and declared that John D. Rockefeller Jr. "is doing a patriotic duty. . . . He should have the approval of all who love justice and true freedom."

On April 22, a "Call to Arms" went out from Denver, addressed to "the Unionists of Colorado." The letter was signed by John Lawson,

John McLennon, Ed Doyle, and several other U.M.W. officials, as well as Ernest Mills, secretary-treasurer of the Western Federation of Miners. It read,

Organize the men in your community in companies of volunteers to protect the workers of Colorado against the murder and cremation of men, women, and children by armed assassins in the employ of coal corporations, serving under the guise of state militiamen. . . .

The state is furnishing no protection to us and we must protect ourselves, our wives and children, from these murderous assassins. We seek no quarrel with the state and we expect to break no law. We intend to exercise our lawful right as citizens to defend our homes and our constitutional rights.

Not until April 23 did the militia allow all the bodies to be removed from the Ludlow ruins. It was reported that in Trinidad "men throng the streets about the union headquarters and demand guns with which to work vengeance upon the militia, which they hold responsible for the destruction of their homes and the death of their women and children."

The press also reported fighting in an area of three square miles, bordered on the west by Berwind and Hastings, on the east by the Barnes station, on the north by the Ludlow tent colony, and on the south by Rameyville. The battlefield was isolated by the cutting of telephone and telegraph wires. The *New York Times* wrote, "MEN FROM OTHER UNION CAMPS JOIN FIGHTERS IN HILLS TO AVENGE THEIR SLAIN: The militia . . . are preparing for a machine-gun sortie. . . . On the surrounding hills, sheltered by rocks and boulders, four hundred strikers await their coming, while their ranks are being swelled by grim-faced men who tramped overland in the dark, carrying guns and ammunition from the neighboring union camps."

The Trinidad Red Cross issued a statement that twenty-six bodies of strikers had been found at Ludlow. There were conflicting reports as to how many had been killed.

Three hundred armed strikers marched from Fremont County tent colonies to aid the embattled miners of southern Colorado. Four train crews of the Colorado and Southern Railroad refused to take soldiers and ammunition from Trinidad to Ludlow. This action touched off talk of a general strike by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and the Colorado State Federation of Labor.

From coast to coast, people responded to the appeal of the Colorado miners. Hundreds of mass meetings were held. Thousands of dollars were sent for arms and ammunition. Conservative unions as far away as Philadelphia took action.

While various groups called for federal intervention to restore law and order, Rockefeller sent a telegram to Congress saying that mining company officials were the "only ones competent to deal with the questions." A telegram to President Wilson from twenty "independent" coal operators in Colorado declared that "we heartily endorse" the Colorado Fuel & Iron position. Meanwhile, John P. White, president of the United Mine Workers, maintained that the strike was a just one.

Near Aguilar, the Empire mine was besieged, the tippie burned, the mouth of the slope caved in by dynamite explosions. Governor Ammons reported an attack on Delagua and Hastings by miners, and Trinidad's mayor and Chamber of Commerce appealed to President Wilson for aid. An attack on the Berwind mine was expected momentarily.

Two hundred militia and company guards along the tracks at Ludlow were cut off from the rest of the district, according to the *Times*, by "armed bands of strikers whose ranks are swelled constantly by men who swarm over the hills from all directions." Three mine guards were reported dead at Aguilar and two mine shafts were in ashes. The press reported that "the hills in every direction seem suddenly to be alive with men."

At Colorado Springs, three hundred union miners quit work to go to the Trinidad district, carrying revolvers, rifles, and shotguns.

The union charged that the National Guard was exploding dynamite in the holes under the tents at Ludlow, to destroy evidence of further loss of life. As for Congress, a headline read, "SENATE AND HOUSE MEMBERS EXPRESS VIEWS BUT TAKE NO ACTION."

A dispatch from Pueblo reported the first legal action. A federal grand jury had returned indictments against eight striking miners on charges of attacking the company post office at Higgins, Colorado.

As a troop train was readied to leave Denver to carry soldiers to the strike zone, the eighty-two men of Company C mutinied and refused to go to the district. According to the *New York Times*, "The men declared they would not engage in the shooting of women and children. They hissed the 350 men who did start and shouted imprecations at them."

A million dollars in damage had reportedly been done in the first two days of the fighting, and the newspapers followed the story closely. A Denver reporter wrote, "Interest today centered in the progress of the troop train sent from Denver to the Ludlow district. One thousand armed strikers met last night to halt the progress of the train."

On April 27, 1914, headlines in the *Times* read, "WILSON TO SEND FEDERAL TROOPS TO COLORADO. AMMONS CALLED TRAITOR. GREAT MASS MEETING OF DENVER CITIZENS DENOUNCE HIM AND LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR FITZGERALD. ASSAIL ROCKEFELLER JR. MEN AND WOMEN WEEP AS BLANCHE BATES' HUSBAND READS RESOLUTION. STRIKERS CAPTURE CHANDLER AFTER TWO DAY BATTLE." The press reported that there was great difficulty getting federal troops because all nearby military posts had been stripped to provide a patrol along the Mexican border.

At the Denver meeting, a crowd of five thousand men and women stood in the pouring rain on the lawn in front of the capital. George Creel, former police commissioner of Denver, read the resolution, asking that Major Hamrock, Lieutenant Linderfelt, and other National Guard officers be tried for murder, and that the state

seize the mines and operate them. They branded the governor and lieutenant governor of Colorado as "traitors to the people and accessories to the murder of babies at Ludlow."

While that meeting was in progress, the Denver Cigar Makers Union voted to send five hundred armed men to Ludlow and Trinidad in the morning. The women of the Denver United Garment Workers Union announced that four hundred of their members had volunteered as nurses to aid the Colorado strikers.

Governor Ammons acted. He appointed a special board of officers, consisting of Major Edward J. Boughton and two infantry captains, to report on the massacre. The Boughton Report concluded that the National Guard was friendly to the strikers, except for Company B, headed by Linderfelt. The report blamed Linderfelt for being "tactless." Upon the withdrawal of the National Guard troops from the field, one unit had to remain behind, it stated, and Company B had been selected "because, although hated by the strikers, it was feared and respected by them."

"The tent colony population is almost wholly foreign and without conception of our government," said the report. "A large percentage are unassimilable aliens to whom liberty means license. . . . Rabid agitators had assured these people that when the soldiers left they were at liberty to take for their own, and by force of arms, the coal mines of their former employers. . . . They prepared for battle."

The Boughton Report found the coal operators only remotely responsible, for having "established in an American industrial community a numerous class of ignorant, lawless, and savage European peasants." But the immediate cause of the violence was seen as the action of Greek strikers in attacking the militia: "The Greeks were the leaders. . . . The conflict was deliberately planned by some of the strikers."

The report recommended that a general court martial should try all officers and men who had mistreated, killed, burned, or looted; that a permanent constabulary should be set up to curb "ferocious foreigners"; that all "instigators" should be apprehended

and punished; and that the reestablishment of the Ludlow tent colony be forbidden.

The left wing of the American labor movement made its contrasting sentiments very clear. Eugene Debs wrote in the *International Socialist Review*, "Like the shot at Lexington on April 20 in another year, the shots fired at Ludlow were heard around the world. . . . It is more historic than Lexington and . . . will prove, as we believe, the signal for the American industrial revolution." Another article by Debs called for a Gunmen Defense Fund, with "the latest high power rifles, the same ones used by the corporation gunmen, and 500 rounds of cartridges. In addition to this, every district should purchase and equip and man enough Gatling and machine guns to match the equipment of Rockefeller's private army of assassins. This suggestion is made advisedly, and I hold myself responsible for every word of it." Mother Jones told a House of Representatives committee, "The laboring man is tired of working to build up millions so that millionaires' wives may wear diamonds."

With the National Guard in Colorado unable to control the mounting waves of violence, damages mounting to many millions of dollars, and over twenty killed since the massacre, Governor Ammons requested that President Wilson send in federal troops.

According to Upton Sinclair (who sometimes exaggerated), on the day the federal troops were sent, the miners had dynamite under all the railroad tracks into Trinidad, ready to blow them up, two million rounds of ammunition at a piano warehouse, and fifteen hundred men in a neighboring state, armed and pledged to march over the mountains.

On April 29 President Wilson proclaimed, "Whereas it is provided by the Constitution of the United States (that the U.S. shall protect states, upon application against domestic violence) . . . now, therefore, I warn all persons . . . to disperse and retire peaceably to their respective abodes on or before the 30<sup>th</sup> day of April, instant."

Secretary of War Garrison asked all parties to surrender their arms. The commander of the federal troops prohibited the import

of strikebreakers from other states, prohibited picketing, and protected scabs.

Finally, the fighting ended.

President Wilson appointed a committee to mediate peace, which then drew up a series of proposals. The union accepted. The operators refused. The committee ended its work.

The House Mines and Mining subcommittee assembled to investigate the strike called John D. Rockefeller to testify shortly afterward. Rockefeller was now the object of both sharp attack and vigorous defense. He told the committee he had not visited Colorado for ten years or attended Colorado Fuel & Iron directors' meetings during that period. He said he had not the "slightest idea" of wages or conditions in the mines.

However, according to the report of the Commission on Industrial Relations, Rockefeller had "followed, step by step, the struggle of his executive officials to retain arbitrary power, and to prevent the installation of machinery for collective bargaining, by which abuses might automatically be corrected, and he supported and encouraged this struggle in every letter he wrote to his agents." (The Commission on Industrial Relations had been set up in 1912 by the Senate at President Wilson's request to find a solution for increasing capital-labor conflict. It was headed by a former labor attorney named Frank Walsh, and later held hearings on the Colorado coal strike.)

Rockefeller told the House committee that the strike had cost Colorado Fuel & Iron over a million dollars but that "we stand ready to lose every cent to defend the workers' right to work." A member of the committee asked, "You'll do that, even if you lose all your money, and have all your employees killed?" Rockefeller answered, "It's a great principle. It's a national issue."

Another version of this statement, reported by John Reed, who came up from his travels with the revolutionary Pancho Villa's forces in Mexico to cover the story of the massacre and wrote sev-

eral eloquent articles for the *Metropolitan Magazine*, Rockefeller said, "We would rather that the unfortunate conditions continue, and that we should lose all the millions invested, than that the American workmen should be deprived of their right, under the Constitution, to work for whom they please. That is the great principle at stake."

But Rockefeller was clearly disturbed by the bad name he was getting throughout the country. Picketers, including the novelist Upton Sinclair, had marched outside his New York offices at 26 Broadway, near the churches where Rockefeller worshipped, and around Rockefeller's Tarrytown estate.

Deciding he needed to change the public perception of him as being responsible for the brutal murders in Colorado, he hired Ivy Lee, who had been recommended to him as "the father of public relations in the United States." Lee, who had worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad to make the high rates it was charging palatable to the public, described his work as "the art of getting believed in."

Rockefeller hired Lee for \$1,000 a month, and Lee put out a series of tracts labeled "Facts Concerning the Struggle in Colorado for Industrial Freedom," but his "facts" were all designed to portray the miners in the most ugly light, and included questioning the personal morals of Mother Jones. Radical publications referred to Lee as "Poison Ivy."

Rockefeller considered himself an enlightened man, devoted to Christian principles. In 1913 he had founded the Bureau of Social Hygiene, dedicated to study and cure the evil of prostitution. He had read a good deal, even Karl Marx's *Capital*. "And yet," writes Zeese Papanikolas, biographer of Lou Tikas, "what reading he did, his study, only had the effect of broadening the prejudices he had begun with, after all."

In the seven months after the Ludlow Massacre, the air was filled with talk of negotiations, peace offers, mediation plans. Rockefeller got together with Mackenzie King of Canada, a politician experi-

enced in labor disputes, and later to become prime minister of Canada. What emerged was the Rockefeller Industrial Representation Plan, a substitute for unionism whereby workers would select representatives to discuss problems with management—in effect, a company union.

The talks continued, the hearings went on. Testimony totaling 5,500 pages was heard by the Industrial Relations Commission and the House Mines and Mining subcommittee while federal troops patrolled the strike area.

Based on the report of the investigating committee set up under Major Boughton by order of Governor Ammons, a military court held a series of court-martials of militiamen accused of crimes. They hurried through the trial of ten enlisted men, acquitting them all, then came to Lieutenant Karl Linderfelt. Linderfelt admitted clubbing Lou Tikas with a rifle, admitted this was unsoldierly, but said that “any man who curses me has got the same thing coming.” There was testimony that the rifle stock that broke over Tikas’ head had been weak. The court martial found Linderfelt guilty of assaulting Tikas with a Springfield rifle, “but attaches no criminality thereto. And the court does therefore acquit him.”

With the guardsmen exonerated, the authorities could now deal with the strikers. In May of 1914, John R. Lawson, the leader of the strike, was tried for murder. Judge Granby Hillyer, before whom he was tried, was appointed by the governor after serving as attorney for Colorado Fuel & Iron and assisting in the preparation of other cases against the strikers. The panel from which the jury was chosen was selected by the sheriff of Las Animas County. Lawson was accused of murdering John Nimmo, one of the army of deputies paid by the mining companies and appointed by the sheriff. No effort was made to prove that Lawson fired the fatal shot; he was to be held responsible because he led the strike and was at the Ludlow tent colony on the day of the battle. Sheriff Jefferson Farr of Huerfano County testified that for all he knew, the deputies might have been the murderers. Lawson was convicted.

The Commission on Industrial Relations, consistently friendly to the miners, called his conviction “anarchism for profits and revenge, [which] menaces the security and integrity of American institutions as they seldom have been menaced before.” Lawson’s conviction was eventually overturned.

On December 10, 1914, a special United Mine Workers convention at Denver called off the strike. The union had not won recognition. Sixty-six men, women, and children had been killed. Not one militiaman or mine guard had been convicted of a crime. The following month, Mother Jones told a crowd in Cooper Union that the union had “had only the Constitution. The other side had the bayonets. In the end, bayonets always win.”

The final report of the subcommittee of the House Mines and Mining Committee was printed in 1915. The committee had been asked to determine whether peonage existed in the coalfields; whether postal facilities had been violated; whether immigration laws had been broken; whether citizens had been arrested, tried, or convicted in violation of the Constitution or the laws of the United States; whether interstate commerce had been interfered with. The conclusion of the committee was that, “if any federal law can be enacted to stop such industrial disturbances, Congress should act.” No specific law was suggested. The separate views of several of the subcommittee members were added. Congressman James F. Byrnes, of South Carolina, later to be secretary of state and adviser to President Harry Truman in the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima, declared that no federal laws had been violated and therefore nothing could be done.

Of the Rockefeller-Mackenzie King plan, Samuel Yellen, who chronicled the strike in his book *American Labor Struggles* (1936), wrote, “This plan . . . was the only fruit won by the coal miners of southern Colorado after their long and bloody struggle.” This was a superficial estimate. The strike and the Ludlow Massacre had affected the consciousness of millions of Americans in a way that could not be easily measured.

Little by little, news dispatches about the Colorado strike and its aftermath grew less numerous, until they disappeared altogether. After World War I, a brief strike at the Colorado Fuel & Iron mines was won by the I.W.W., but the union petered away. In 1928, violence flared again in another strike. The United Mine Workers came back, this time for good.

In the thirties, came the rise of the C.I.O. (Congress of Industrial Organizations) and a new wave of militant trade unionism.

Woody Guthrie was moved to write a song, which he entitled "The Ludlow Massacre." Here are two of its eleven stanzas:

You struck a match and the blaze it started.  
You pulled the triggers of your gatling guns.  
I made a run for the children but the fire wall stopped me.  
Thirteen children died from your guns. . . .

We took some cement and walled that cave up  
Where you killed those thirteen children inside.  
I said, "God bless the Mine Workers' Union,"  
And then I hung my head and cried.

Today, on an isolated patch of desert in southern Colorado, in the shadow of the black hills, stands a monument erected by the United Mine Workers on the spot where the death pit of the Ludlow Massacre existed. The monument lists the names of the individuals found in the pit and declares its dedication "to those who gave their lives for freedom at Ludlow."

|                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| Cedelina Costa | Eulala Valdez    |
| Lucy Costa     | Rudolph Valdez   |
| Carlo Costa    | Frank Petrucci   |
| Onafrio Costa  | Joe Petrucci     |
| Parria Valdez  | Lucy Petrucci    |
| Elvira Valdez  | Cloriva Pedragon |
| Mary Valdez    |                  |

The strike in Colorado, like so many struggles of people through the ages, has often been seen as a defeat for the workers. Certainly it was, at the time. But for those who came to know of the event—mostly outside the classroom—in the decades since the Ludlow Massacre, the story has been educational and inspiring.

We learn something about the symbiotic relationship between giant corporations and government. We learn about the selective control of violence, where the authorities deal one way with the violence of workers and another way with the violence of police and militia. We learn about the role of the mainstream press. At the same time, we are inspired by those ordinary men and women who persist, with extraordinary courage, in their resistance to overwhelming power. It is a story that continues in our time.