

MOTHER JONES AND THE UNITED MINE WORKERS

by

John C. Britt

A THESIS

Approved:

Committee

Approved:

Dean of the Graduate School

MOTHER JONES AND THE UNITED
MINE WORKERS

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of History
Sam Houston State College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
John C. Britt
May, 1968

ABSTRACT

Britt, John C., Mother Jones and the United Mine Workers. Master of Arts (History), May, 1968, Sam Houston State College, Huntsville, Texas. 96 pp.

Purpose

It was the purpose of this study to investigate the role of Mary Harris (Mother) Jones in building the United Mine Workers of America into the most powerful labor organization in the United States and in keeping the miners' struggle for better conditions of life and labor before the press and public.

Methods

The methods used to obtain material for this study were the following: (1) examination of The New York Times from 1900 to 1915, as well as other newspapers and periodicals of the period; (2) examination of the Congressional Record and other government documents; (3) examination of The Autobiography of Mother Jones; and (4) examination of various secondary sources.

Findings

The evidence presented in this study suggests the following conclusions:

1. Mother Jones' organizational activities in the anthracite strike of 1900 played a major role in winning that struggle for the United Mine Workers and thus aided in placing the miners' union in the forefront of the American labor movement.

2. The increase in union membership in the anthracite fields that resulted from Mother Jones' work in the 1900 strike contributed to the United Mine Workers' triumph in the 1902 strike.

3. In the West Virginia strike of 1912-1913, Mother Jones was responsible for the extension of the strike into the previously nonunion Cabin Creek field, an event which greatly increased the union's bargaining power in West Virginia.

4. Mother Jones' court-martial before a military tribunal during the West Virginia strike was widely publicized throughout the nation by a shocked press and thus mustered public opinion behind the strikers.

5. The military trial of Mother Jones in West Virginia prompted the United States Senate to authorize an unprecedented investigation of conditions in the West Virginia strike zone.

6. The threatened Senate investigation of the West Virginia strike situation forced embarrassed state officials to seek an end to the strike by pressuring West Virginia coal operators to comply with union demands. The result was a major union victory in West Virginia.

7. In the Colorado strike of 1913-1914, Mother Jones' imprisonment and subsequent deportation from the strike zone by state officials were publicized throughout the nation and resulted in increased public interest in the plight of the Colorado miners.

8. Mother Jones' tour of the United States during the Colorado strike following the Ludlow massacre helped focus national attention on the Colorado problem.

9. The conversations between Mother Jones and John D. Rockefeller, Jr., the chairman of the board of the largest coal company in Colorado, helped bring about an improvement in the living and working conditions of the Colorado miners.

10. Mother Jones' involvement in the four major strikes the United Mine Workers' waged between 1900 and 1914, resulted in greatly increased membership for the union and stimulated public interest in the miners' cause. Mother Jones contributed substantially to the union victory in three of these strikes.

Approved:

Supervising Professor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. THE ANTHRACITE STRIKE OF 1900	6
III. THE WEST VIRGINIA STRIKE OF 1912-1913	25
IV. THE COLORADO STRIKE OF 1913-1914	62
V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	89
BIBLIOGRAPHY	93
VITA	97

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1897 the United Mine Workers of America became the largest single labor organization in the United States and consequently found itself in the forefront of the American labor movement. During the next three decades the United Mine Workers would increase in size and influence, but not without industrial strife and conflict. In a period when the nation's great corporations were proclaiming their allegiance to the openshop principle the entire labor movement watched with intense interest the efforts of the mine workers' union to establish its power in the anthracite coal fields of Pennsylvania, the bituminous fields of West Virginia, and the Rockefeller dominated mines of southern Colorado. In the success or failure of the United Mine Workers lay, to a great extent, the victory or defeat of the trade union movement in the United States.

One of the most colorful and interesting figures of the turn-of-the-century struggles of the miners' union was Mary Harris Jones, known affectionately to the thousands of coal miners throughout the country as "Mother" Jones. Though she never held a union office, Mother Jones' services to the United Mine Workers were such that they made her a legend in her own time. As a rank-and-file organizer this little woman in her seventies and eighties traveled across the United States to participate in every major industrial conflict the miners' union engaged in during this period. Her main gift was her ability to dramatize the

position of the miners in an industrial conflict--to display before the public the union's side of the issue.

Mother Jones was born in Cork County, Ireland, on May 1, 1830. Her father, Richard Harris, has been described as an "Irish [labor] agitator."¹ While Mary was still a child her father migrated to Canada with his family where he found work in Toronto with a railroad construction crew. Following her brief schooling, Mother Jones was employed as a teacher in a convent near Monroe, Michigan. Later she opened a dress-making shop in Chicago. After a short career as a seamstress, she went back to teaching for a time in Memphis, Tennessee. In 1861, she married a young iron worker. Tragically, she lost her husband and her four children in the yellow fever epidemic that swept the South in 1867. Following the death of her family, Mother Jones returned to Chicago where she began a second venture in dress-making. Here she catered to the wealthy and fashionable of the city. She lost her shop, however, in the great Chicago fire of 1871.²

It was after the Chicago fire that Mother Jones was first attracted to the labor movement. According to her autobiography, she joined the Knights of Labor. This was a natural act on her part since both her husband and her father had been active in the labor movement. As a member of the Knights, Mother Jones claimed she served as an organizer

¹P. C. Michaelson, "Mother Jones," The Delineator, LXXXVI (May, 1915), p. 8.

²The Washington Post, December 2, 1930, p. 2.

in the Baltimore and Ohio railroad strike during the Panic of 1873. She witnessed the great Pittsburgh railroad strike of 1877, and the Haymarket disturbances in Chicago in 1886.³ One source credits her with a journey to San Francisco in the mid-1870's where she participated in Dennis Kearney's "sand-lot" agitation against the Chinese influx and the railroads.⁴

In the twentieth century, at least three American labor unions claimed Mother Jones at various times: the Industrial Workers of the World, the American Federation of Labor, and the United Mine Workers. In 1905 she attended the organization meeting of the Industrial Workers of the World; however, she soon deserted the "Wobblies" because of their radicalism.⁵ During the steel strike of 1919, she served Samuel Gompers' American Federation of Labor as a field organizer.⁶ Nevertheless, it was in the efforts to improve the lot of her "boys" as she called them, the coal miners of America, that she devoted most of her time and energy during the last thirty years of her life.

It is difficult to determine exactly when and why Mother Jones became involved with the United Mine Workers. According to her own testimony, as early as 1891, one year after the miners' union was

³Mary Harris Jones, The Autobiography of Mother Jones, pp. 24-27.

⁴Michelson, The Delineator, LXXXVI, p. 8.

⁵William D. Haywood, Bill Haywood's Book: The Autobiography of William D. Haywood, pp. 184-187.

⁶David Brody, Labor in Crisis: The Steel Strike of 1919, pp. 93-94.

founded, she participated as a union organizer in a coal strike in Virginia.⁷ From then until her death at the age of one hundred years in 1930, her major interest was the United Mine Workers and the men it represented.⁸ Proud of her independence of union leadership, she refused throughout her career to accept any office other than that of a rank-and-file organizer. In every major conflict the miners fought she was there, encouraging the men to maintain their will to fight or trying to convince an unsympathetic public of the justice of the miners' cause.

This paper is a study of the career of Mother Jones as an organizer for the United Mine Workers of America. An attempt will be made to show her effectiveness in gaining sympathy for the union position from the usually hostile or disinterested press and government. Particular emphasis will be placed on Mother Jones' involvement in the early struggle to unionize the anthracite coal fields of Pennsylvania, her activities in the West Virginia strike of 1912-1913, and the Colorado conflict of 1913-1914. Each of these incidents was of major importance in the development of the United Mine Workers. Mother Jones' participation in these conflicts received national attention at the time, and, on at least one occasion, motivated the federal government to inquire, in a manner sympathetic to the miners, into the struggle. The study is not an attempt to portray the life of Mother Jones, but rather a study of three

⁷Jones, The Autobiography of Mother Jones, p. 24.

⁸The Washington Post, December 2, 1930, p. 2.

specific situations in which she contributed to the further development of the United Mine Workers.

Sources for the study will include issues of The New York Times from 1900 to 1915, as well as other newspapers of the period. The United Mine Workers Journal will also be used. Additional sources will include the Congressional Record, The Autobiography of Mother Jones by Mary Harris Jones, as well as other books and periodicals.

CHAPTER II

THE ANTHRACITE STRIKE OF 1900

Despite the fact that by 1900 the United Mine Workers was the largest single labor organization in the United States, there were still some 300,000 coal miners outside the union. Approximately half of these were in the anthracite regions of Pennsylvania. To United Mine Workers' President John Mitchell, the unorganized anthracite fields represented a serious weakness that needed correction. As a consequence, in the late summer of 1900 the union engaged in a sustained organizational drive in Pennsylvania that resulted in a strike call on September 17.¹ This began a strike that would be one of the most important in the history of the youthful mine workers. Among the union's more effective organizers in the anthracite conflict was Mother Jones. Throughout all of September and early October, she was freely used by the union to organize local unions and exhort the miners and their families for the purpose of closing down collieries throughout the state. Such activities on the part of a woman in her seventies could not help but attract the attention of the nation's press, and by the time the strike was over, Mother Jones was a nationally known figure.

Trouble between the miners and their employers had long been brewing in the anthracite fields. The fields, which were the country's major source of fuel for heating purposes, were monopolistically controlled by

¹Philip Taft, Organized Labor in American History, pp. 173-175.

a number of large railroad companies. They were virtually unorganized. The miners had not received an increase in wages since 1880. The average pay was three hundred seventy-five dollars yearly, far less than enough to support a family. Furthermore, the miners felt they were being cheated on the weighing of coal by the companies. They claimed they were expected to produce over 2,600 pounds of coal in order to be credited with a ton of 2,240 pounds. In addition, employees were expected to trade at the company store, and the high prices they were charged kept them in constant indebtedness.²

The five hundred square mile anthracite region was divided into three districts: district one, the Wyoming and Lackawanna fields; district seven, the Lehigh field; and district nine, the Schuylkill field.³ By 1900, there were approximately 142,000 miners in the three districts. Of these, the United Mine Workers could claim fewer than eight thousand members, the majority of whom were in the Wyoming and Lackawanna fields where discontent was greatest. Although the international union was sympathetic to the plight of the anthracite miners, it was unwilling at that time to finance an organizational drive in the area.⁴

²Ibid., p. 174.

³Ibid., p. 173.

⁴United Mine Workers of America, Annual Report of International Officers, Auditors, Tellers and Delegates, Proceedings of the United Mine Workers of America, 1901, p. 33.

Nevertheless, in early 1900, Thomas D. Nicholls, the President of the Wyoming and Lackawanna district, petitioned John Mitchell for permission to institute a strike in district one. After studying the situation, Mitchell reported that before a strike could be successful, the Lehigh and Schuylkill fields would have to be organized.⁵ A team of United Mine Workers organizers, including Mother Jones, was sent into the two districts. In an effort to recruit new members, Mother Jones and the other organizers traveled "from camp to camp, from city to city, addressing meetings, making personal calls and telling the men to stand by their guns."⁶

On July 17, 1900, a call was sent to the three anthracite districts for a convention to be held in Hazleton, Pennsylvania, on August 13.⁷ The convention issued an invitation to the anthracite operators to meet with representatives of the union for the purpose of discussing the grievances of the miners. The operators ignored the proposal.⁸ The matter was then referred to the executive board of the United Mine Workers. John Mitchell, reluctant to call a major strike in the anthracite fields, made a number of efforts to convince the operators to meet with representatives of the miners. When these efforts failed, the

⁵Robert J. Cornell, The Anthracite Coal Strike of 1902, pp. 39-40.

⁶"Great Power of Mother Jones Who Comes Here," United Mine Workers Journal, XIV (October 29, 1903), p. 7.

⁷Cornell, The Anthracite Coal Strike of 1902, p. 41.

⁸Samuel Yallen, American Labor Struggles, p. 144.

strike was called for September 17.⁹ In a statement released to the press, Mitchell informed the public of the causes of the strike:

. . . [The miners] wages have not kept pace with the cost of living, and in some instances have been reduced: they have been required to deal in company stores and accept the services of the company's doctor: they have been required to accept wages based upon an antiquated sliding scale that invariably slides downward: they have had their wages reduced by an arbitrary and exorbitant system of dockage: they have been compelled to wait for their pay after the time specified by law in open violation of the same and in many instances they have been compelled to take their children from school at a very tender age in violation of law and put them to work in the breakers in order to earn sufficient food to support their families.¹⁰

To Mother Jones it was obvious that victory in the anthracite field depended on getting as many men as possible to lay down their tools. Even before the strike call was officially issued, she was at work encouraging miners to join the forthcoming walkout. As early as September 10, she addressed a meeting at Latimer encouraging the miners to quit work. On September 13, she, along with several other organizers, spoke to an estimated one thousand miners at Locust Gap, urging the formation of a local union.¹¹ On September 17, the day the strike began, Mother Jones is reported to have addressed a mass meeting at the North Franklin colliery of the Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Company near Shamokin. The New York Times observed that, following Mother Jones'

⁹"Anthracite Strike Order Issued," United Mine Workers Journal, XI (September 13, 1900), p. 1.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹The New York Times, September 14, 1900, p. 1.

appearance in the area, some eighty per cent of the 15,000 men employed in the mines in Shamokin left their jobs.¹² That same evening, she spoke to another large gathering of miners at Trevorton. However, the Philadelphia Inquirer suggested that the meeting was not a success as Mother Jones was "entirely too revolutionary for the men in this district."¹³

The day after the strike was proclaimed John Mitchell enthusiastically reported that some 118,000 men were idle throughout the region.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the union was determined to bring as many men out as possible and continued its efforts to increase the total number of men participating in the strike. Mother Jones, in the meantime, was forced to spend a few days in Hazleton after her exhaustive speaking tour in order that her voice, which had "worn down . . . to a whisper," might recover.¹⁵ She was soon back in the field; and on the morning of September 22, organized a parade of women at MacAdoo in an attempt to close down the collieries at Coleraine and Bever Meadow. The Philadelphia Inquirer reported that the procession led by Mother Jones swooped down upon Coleraine "with a band at their head, [and] the men following at the rear."¹⁶ The Inquirer continued with the following information:

¹²Ibid.

¹³Philadelphia Inquirer, September 19, 1900, p. 2.

¹⁴Chicago Record, September 19, 1900, p. 3.

¹⁵Philadelphia Inquirer, September 21, 1900, p. 1.

¹⁶Philadelphia Inquirer, September 23, 1900, I, p. 6.

On arriving at Coleraine, emotional frenzy reached its limit. The men who were on their way to work were seized. When cold argument failed some of the women threw their arms about the miners' necks and exercised all powers of pleading. Unable to resist the demonstrative actions of the women, the miners gave in, and consented to return to their homes.¹⁷

After stopping work at Coleraine, Mother Jones and her army of marchers continued to Bever Meadow but arrived after the miners had already reported to the mines.¹⁸ Disappointed, the women planned to return the next day. At four o'clock on Saturday morning they left MacAdoo on their second march:

Two of the women carrying flags led the band, and all manifested the greatest enthusiasm. Mother Jones was at the head, and her presence seemed to give the greatest inspiration to all who followed. The men trailed behind the women. At every mining town there were accessions to the ranks. At times when men were met who resisted the importunities of the marchers, the women threw their arms about their necks and won the day. They sung words to popular tunes played by the band at times when halts were made . . . and refused every offer to relieve their weary feet by taking advantage of offers of carriage rides.¹⁹

As the parade approached Bever Meadow, the festive mood was interrupted when the marchers found their path blocked by armed deputies who forced them to remain on the public highway. The Chicago Record credited

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Chicago Record, September 24, 1900, p. 2.

Mother Jones' cool-headed handling of the situation with preventing violence.²⁰

The following day a mob of miners attempted to close the collieries at Derringer, but were prevented from accomplishing their goal by the sheriff and some thirty deputies.²¹ Four miners were arrested for refusing to turn around when ordered. As a result of the incident, Sheriff Harvey of Luzerne County wired the governor of Pennsylvania for troops. The sheriff claimed that Mother Jones and John Mitchell had led the women and were the instigators of the trouble.²² Mitchell, however, denied that either he or Mother Jones was involved.²³

Mother Jones, in the meantime, continued her efforts to shut down those mines that were still in operation and maintain the determination of the strikers to stay off the job. The same day as the Derringer incident she spoke to what was described as a mass meeting at Nuremburg. She advised the miners to remain firm. "Every reference [Mother Jones made] to 'holding out' was received with enthusiasm."²⁴ At St. Clair a local union was formed after she spoke to the workers. On September 28,

²⁰Ibid., "Confidence and Determination of Strikers Presages Early Adjustment of Long Standing Grievances," United Mine Workers Journal, XI (September 27, 1900), p. 8.

²¹The New York Times, September 26, 1900, p. 1.

²²Chicago Record, September 26, 1900, p. 2.

²³The New York Times, September 26, 1900, p. 1.

²⁴Philadelphia Inquirer, September 26, 1900, p. 8.

she talked to miners employed by the Reading Company at New Philadelphia. The United Mine Workers claimed that the Reading Company's mines would be closed shortly.²⁵

The efforts of Mother Jones and the other organizers were so successful that the operators attempted to blame them for the entire strike situation. As far as the mine owners were concerned there would never have been a strike if it were not for the activities of these "foreigners."²⁶ It was the view of the mine owners that

These people get near to the miners; they appeal to the men daily and hourly in language they understand; and they arouse the passions in men and women that have brought on one fatal collision and produced daily slight occurrences.²⁷

In the meantime efforts were being made to end the strike. Marcus A. Hanna, a leading Republican Senator from Ohio, feared that if the strike were allowed to continue, it would create coal shortages in the eastern cities during the coming winter and thus harm the re-election chances of President William McKinley. After conferring with Mitchell through an intermediary, Hanna presented the union's demands to the operators, including a ten per cent wage increase. While the operators continued in their refusal to recognize the union, they gave in to Republican pressure and began to post notices informing the miners of a ten per cent hike in pay. It was hoped that this would break the strike.

²⁵The New York Times, September 29, 1900, p. 2.

²⁶The New York Times, September 27, 1900, p. 2.

²⁷Ibid.

Union leaders, however, informed the public that the strike would continue until a settlement was accepted by a convention of the three anthracite districts.²⁸

Union organizers remained determined in their efforts to close down all the mines and maintain the morale of the strikers. In early October a massive demonstration was held at Wilkes-Barre. The United Mine Workers Journal reported that some twenty thousand men participated, making it the largest demonstration ever held in the anthracite region. The miners, convinced that they had won the strike, were jubilant. "All felt," observed the union's journal, "that the power displayed by the mine workers had opened a new era in the great anthracite region."²⁹ John Mitchell shared the speakers' platform with Mother Jones. In her address she urged the miners to stand together until terms "deemed satisfactory by a convention representing the mine workers of the entire region should be offered by the operators."³⁰

Throughout early October, while United Mine Workers' officials were considering the operators' proposals, Mother Jones continued to organize parades and demonstrations in the MacAdoo and Bever Meadow area. Union leadership, fearful that these activities might result in bloodshed or the destruction of company property that would hurt their cause,

²⁸Robert J. Cornell, The Anthracite Coal Strike of 1902, pp. 53-56.

²⁹"Twenty Thousand in Line of March at Wilkes-Barre Tuesday," United Mine Workers Journal, XI (October 4, 1900), p. 1.

³⁰Ibid.

discouraged her. Mother Jones, defiant of what she considered to be false council, refused to comply and showed her impatience with John Mitchell's conduct of the strike. Mitchell knew nothing of her activities, she noted in her autobiography, until a newspaper reporter telephoned him that "Mother Jones was raising hell up in the mountains with a bunch of wild women." The union president, she observed, "got nervous."³¹

Mitchell's nervousness was not without cause. At Oneida, near Hazleton, violence broke out on October 10, when a coal and iron policeman was killed and two miners seriously wounded in a clash between mine guards and strikers. The following day, Mother Jones led a parade of women from the MacAdoo area in a successful attempt to close down the colliery owned by the Coxe Brothers at Bever Meadow. From Bever Meadow the marchers headed for Hazleton in an effort to stop work at one of the few mines in the area still in operation. Just inside the city the marchers found their way blocked by a barricade thrown up by company guards. "Just at the moment when a clash seemed certain, Mother Jones appeared on the scene, and the strikers formed for a march through Hazleton. A crowd of deputies were posted at a convenient point to meet them, but the procession was disbanded."³²

In mid-October a convention of the three anthracite districts was called to order in Hazleton. John Mitchell advised the eight hundred and fifty-seven delegates to accept the ten per cent wage increase

³¹Jones, The Autobiography of Mother Jones, p. 91.

³²Chicago Record, October 12, 1900, p. 1.

offered by the operators. The convention responded to Mitchell's address by voting to agree to the proposal provided the new wage scale would continue in effect until April 1, 1901. It was also recommended that if the operators failed to accept these conditions, then the issue should be decided by a board of arbitration. The strike was to be continued in the meantime. Although the sessions were secret, the New Orleans Times-Democrat reported that Mother Jones was one of the speakers who addressed the convention; however, it failed to mention the subject of her speech.³³

Following the convention, Mother Jones returned to the field to organize one of the biggest raids of the strike. Since late September the union had made futile attempts to close down the collieries belonging to the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company in the Panther Creek Valley. Organizers, including Mother Jones, were constantly in the area, but their efforts had met with little success. Consequently, Mother Jones decided that a big demonstration should be held in the valley to get the men out of the ten mines located there. Approximately one thousand five hundred men and sixty women from a number of the mining communities located north of Hazleton gathered at MacAdoo at 1:30 on the morning of October 16 to begin the march. Led by several fife and drum corps and a brass band, the men started off on foot while the women followed in a collection of horse-drawn vehicles. In addition, five carriages containing newspapermen joined the marchers. After passing through Tamaqua, where there were additions to the ranks, the parade continued

³³New Orleans Times-Democrat, October 14, 1900, p. 8.

toward Coaldale in Panther Valley.³⁴ Just as they neared their destination, they were met by three companies of the Pennsylvania National Guard who ordered them to disperse and return to their homes.³⁵ Mother Jones vehemently protested the action of the troops to the militia commander. As she later told the United States Commission on Industrial Relations:

The militia [commander] did not know what kind of an army I had with me. He thought it was just a few strikers; he told us to go back. I told him that the American workingman never goes backward; we did not go out to go back; and he said he would charge bayonets. Well, he didn't do it anyway; but it took us three hours to go back two miles.³⁶

In spite of Mother Jones' opposition, by six o'clock the troops had forced the marchers back to Tamaqua and had effectively ended the demonstration. Fortunately, bloodshed had been avoided.³⁷

The following day, the Pennsylvania coal operators announced they would meet the demands of their striking employees by granting a ten per cent increase in wages effective until April 1, 1901. The announcement ended two days of discussions between representatives of the large coal companies. The coal operators avoided the question of union

³⁴New Orleans Times-Democrat, October 17, 1900, p. 2.

³⁵Chicago Record, October 17, 1900, p. 1.

³⁶U. S. Commission on Industrial Relations, Final Report and Testimony Submitted to Congress by the Commission on Industrial Relations, 1916, XI, p. 10620.

³⁷Chicago Record, October 17, 1900, p. 1.

recognition by posting the increase in wage rates at the collieries rather than formally informing the United Mine Workers.³⁸

Union officials met in Hazleton to study the offer and after several days of conferences the president of the union's executive board issued a statement:

Gentlemen: After carefully canvassing the entire strike situation, we, your officers, district and national, have concluded that your victory is so nearly complete that no good end can be served by continuing the strike. . . . The companies employing you have, with a few exceptions, signified their willingness to pay the scale of wages formulated by the Scranton convention of October 12 and 13. . . .

While it is true that the increase in earnings will not compensate for the arduous labor you are compelled to perform in the mines, you have established a powerful organization.³⁹

Although the union did not get everything it desired, the capitulation of the companies symbolized by the increase in wages signified a major victory in the anthracite fields for the United Mine Workers.

The union's problems, however, were far from over. In early 1902, it was becoming painfully obvious that there was still a great deal of discontent in the anthracite districts. Wildcat strikes were increasing, and there were complaints that the mining companies were discriminating against the more aggressive union members. As a consequence in March of 1902, Mitchell invited the operators to discuss grievances in a meeting with representatives of the union. The operators rather curtly refused.

³⁸Chicago Record, October 18, 1900, p. 1.

³⁹Chicago Record, October 26, 1900, p. 1.

On March 12, an anthracite tri-district convention was called at Shamokin. The convention presented the operators with a list of demands which included the eight-hour work day. Union officials were authorized to call a strike if an agreement could not be reached. Throughout the next month Mitchell and other United Mine Workers officers made a desperate attempt to head off a strike. A conference was arranged by Senator Mark Hanna as head of the National Civic Foundation between the miners' union and the leading coal producers. However, no progress was made. Mitchell then proposed that the problem be referred to a board of arbitration composed of three parties, including a representative of the miners. The operators, led by George F. Baer, President of the Reading Railroad, rejected this approach. The union officials then called for a temporary suspension of work to begin on May 12, with a convention of the anthracite districts to decide whether or not the strike was to be continued. Although Mitchell advised against it, the convention, meeting on May 14, voted to continue the strike by a majority of over one hundred votes.⁴⁰

Mother Jones took little active part in the 1902 anthracite conflict. At the time the strike was called, she was in West Virginia attempting to organize the bituminous fields in that state. John Mitchell wrote her the following:

I have every reason to believe that the strike will be made general and permanent. I am of the opinion that this will be the fiercest struggle in which we have yet engaged. It will be a fight to the end. . . .⁴¹

⁴⁰Taft, Organized Labor in American History, pp. 176-177.

⁴¹Cornell, The Anthracite Coal Strike of 1902, p. 91.

In response to Mitchell's letter, Mother Jones left West Virginia in mid-summer of 1902, for the Pennsylvania anthracite fields. On July 20, she spoke to a large crowd of miners in the western part of the state. According to the Philadelphia Inquirer,

She implored those present to fulfill as soon as possible the financial obligations they had assumed, as the anthracite strike must be won if it takes the whole country to win it. [She told her audience] to instruct their representatives in legislative halls that government by injunction must be downed forever by the American people. . . .

In conclusion she said that labor's history had been that of endeavoring to advance Christianity upwards and onwards and asked her hearers to use their organization for the uplifting of humanity and not for personal advancement.⁴²

In August she held several meetings in the Wilkes-Barre district. These were followed by a number of speeches at mining communities in the Hazleton area where she urged the miners to maintain their will to continue the fight. "Here," she told the United Mine Workers Journal, "the men are more determined than they were when the strike began, and nothing seems sufficient to shake their faith in the ultimate success of their cause."⁴³

As the strike entered its fourth bitter month, incidents of violence increased. By mid-September, some fourteen persons had been killed, a number of others wounded, and much company property destroyed. In

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³"Anthracite Situation," United Mine Workers Journal, XIII (August 20, 1902), p. 1.

addition, it was becoming increasingly apparent that unless the strike was settled in the near future, the nation would face a serious coal shortage in the coming winter.⁴⁴

President Theodore Roosevelt felt that the strike had to be ended, even if it meant government intervention. A meeting was scheduled at the White House on October 3, between the United Mine Workers and the heads of the coal producing companies. During the conference Mitchell informed Roosevelt that the union would be willing to accept arbitration by a commission appointed by the President if the union was represented. George F. Baer, however, speaking for the operators, rejected this solution and demanded that the President employ federal troops to protect the companies' property. Baer's refusal to accept any compromise arrangement cost the coal producers a great deal of public support.⁴⁵

Eventually the government suggested a second compromise approach. Secretary of War Elihu Root proposed to J. Pierpoint Morgan that a commission be appointed

by the President or by Morgan, which commission would consider the question at issue between the operators and their workers. Each company would present the differences between itself and its employees as a body to said commission, and the findings in each instance would be the basis for an agreement between the companies and their employees for a term of years.⁴⁶

⁴⁴Taft, Organized Labor in American History, p. 178.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 179.

⁴⁶Cornell, The Anthracite Coal Strike of 1902, pp. 215-216.

This would eliminate the operators' objection to dealing with the United Mine Workers. The operators, under pressure from Morgan, agreed to the plan and the union called a convention at Wilkes-Barre on October 20, to decide whether or not they would accept the proposal.⁴⁷ Under Mitchell's persuasion the delegates decided to accept the proposition and announced that the men would return to work on October 23.⁴⁸

Mother Jones, who was convinced that the strikers should have held out for union recognition, made no secret of her disgust with Mitchell's easy surrender. She burst into fiery denunciation of him and declared,

Flattery and homage did its work with John Mitchell. The strike was won. Absolutely no anthracite coal was being dug. The operators could have been made to deal with the unions if Mr. Mitchell had stood firm. A moral victory would have been won for the principle of unionism. This to my mind was more important than the material gains which the miners received through the later decision of the president's board.⁴⁹

John Mitchell was convinced that he could take no other course of action without breaking his word since he had insisted upon arbitration for months. Like Mother Jones, he well knew the victory that was in sight would give immediate and enticing gains. Unlike her, however, he contended that a forced victory would eliminate the hard-earned public support.⁵⁰

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 232.

⁴⁸David J. McDonald and Edward A. Lynch, Coal and Unionism: A History of the American Coal Miners' Unions, p. 60.

⁴⁹Jones, The Autobiography of Mother Jones, pp. 59-60.

⁵⁰Else Gluck, John Mitchell, Miner: Labor's Bargain with the Gilded Age, p. 132.

In late March of 1903, the commission announced its decision. The miners were to be given a ten per cent increase in wages and a nine-hour work day. The sliding scale, whereby miners were to get increases in pay with the increases in the price of coal, was also included as part of the settlement. A board of conciliation for settling the differences which arose during a contract was established. Although the union was not recognized by the operators, discrimination against employees for union membership was condemned.⁵¹

The settlement of the strike of 1902 represented a major victory for the United Mine Workers despite the fact that the union was not given official status as the bargaining agent for the miners. The willingness of the union to submit the issues to arbitration had gained a new respect among the general public for organized labor. As a consequence of its gains in the anthracite region the United Mine Workers of America "for the next twenty years . . . was to remain a stable support for other labor organizations and the entire labor movement."⁵²

The impetus given by Mother Jones to increased United Mine Workers membership through organization of the Pennsylvania miners in the 1900 strike directly helped win the strike of 1902. Wherever she went, whenever she addressed the miners, immediately new recruits were gained. Earlier hindrances had been successfully eliminated. Through her speeches and marches in the 1900 Pennsylvania strike, union membership

⁵¹Taft, Organized Labor in American History, p. 180.

⁵²Ibid., p. 181.

soared. Without Mother Jones, it is doubtful that the victories in 1900 and 1902 would have been as complete as they were.

CHAPTER III

THE WEST VIRGINIA STRIKE OF 1912-1913

By 1912 the United Mine Workers of America appeared to be the strongest labor organization in the United States. It had a membership in excess of 250,000, and was well established in the important bituminous mines of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, as well as the anthracite region of Pennsylvania. In addition, because it had been able to avoid a serious labor conflict for almost a decade, the union's finances were sound.¹ However, the miners' union had a serious weakness in its inability to extend its organization into the coal fields of West Virginia. This weakness was recognized by United Mine Workers' President John Mitchell, who in early 1912 initiated a drive to enlist the West Virginia miners in the union's ranks.² The result was a violent strike from which the union would emerge victorious. Mother Jones played a major role in making this victory possible. In the early days of the strike she served the union as a field organizer and was instrumental in convincing hundreds of miners to leave their jobs. Later, she left the strike zone on a dramatic speaking tour in an effort to win sympathy for the strikers. She appeared in the halls of the United States Congress on behalf of the union. When the old organizer returned to West Virginia and was imprisoned

¹David J. McDonald and Edward A. Lynch, Coal and Unionism: A History of the American Coal Miners' Unions, p. 62.

²Philip Taft, Organized Labor in American History, p. 57.

by the state on a charge of inciting murder, the United Mine Workers used her plight to force an unprecedented investigation by the United States Senate into the conditions surrounding the strike.

The coal producers of West Virginia recognized the fact that they enjoyed a distinct competitive advantage over the operators in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, who cooperated with the union in the Central Competitive Field Agreement. This was an advantage West Virginia mine operators were not willing to surrender easily, and, as a consequence, despite a sustained organizational drive during the previous decade, the United Mine Workers had not been able to gain more than a foothold in the state.³

The year 1912 saw a renewal of the struggle to unionize the coal fields of West Virginia. In early April, the Paint Creek Colliery Company, which operated most of the unionized mines in the Paint Creek area of Kanawha County, refused to negotiate a new agreement with District 17 of the United Mine Workers of America. The union interpreted this move on the part of the company as the first step in a campaign to destroy what influence the miners' organization had in West Virginia. A strike was called for April 20, and the United Mine Workers seized the opportunity to launch a countercampaign to spread the strike into the unorganized coal fields of Kanawha County, one of the most important coal producing regions of the state.⁴ In the words of a contemporary observer,

³Taft, Organized Labor, p. 257.

⁴John W. Brown, "Resume of the Strike in West Virginia," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIII (December 26, 1912), p. 2.

both the union officials and the mine operators viewed the struggle as a "fight for [the] unionism of the entire coal fields of West Virginia, now largely nonunion."⁵ He further stated that

If the operators stamp out the effort to restore unionism on Paint and Cabin Creeks and prevent its going further than it has already gone . . . [in other areas of West Virginia] it will mean the checkmating of unionism in the coal fields of the state. . . .

If on the other hand, the miners win, their organization will be pushed first into one field, then into another, until the whole state shall have been unionized. It will take them years to do this. This explains the extreme bitterness of the present fight, each side practically staking its all on one throw.⁶

The miners in Kanawha County had been seething with revolt for a number of years. On the surface, conditions in the organized field of the Paint Creek district were relatively good—comparable at least to the conditions that existed among miners in the Central Competitive Field.⁷ However, the miners lived in constant fear of losing the advantages that they had already secured; it was this, more than anything else, that had brought about the strike.⁸ The miners in the nearby Cabin Creek field, on the other hand, suffered from many of the abuses that characterized a number of the nonunion coal fields of the period. Coal company employees were required to buy at company stores at prices considerably above those

⁵Harold West, "Civil War in West Virginia," The Survey, XXXI (April 5, 1913), p. 40.

⁶Ibid., pp. 40-41.

⁷Ibid., p. 38.

⁸Brown, United Mine Workers Journal, XXIII, p. 2.

of independent dealers. Payrolls were often in script instead of currency. The miners were paid only once a month; consequently, many of them were forced to buy on credit at the company commissary and were faced with a constant, growing indebtedness. One of the most grievous complaints was of the brutality of the Baldwin-Felts Detectives who were employed by the companies as mine guards. Moreover, the companies owned the houses occupied by their employees, a condition that caused great hardship since the miners were forced to vacate them once the decision to strike had been made.⁹

Shortly after the initial strike call in the Paint Creek district, union officials turned their attention to the unorganized fields of Kanawha County. By early summer the collieries of the Cabin Creek Consolidated Coal and Mining Company had become the focal point of the United Mine Workers' campaign to spread the strike. The union's international vice-president, Frank J. Hayes, who had been in West Virginia since the Paint Creek strike had been initiated, personally took charge of the effort in the Cabin Creek field. Organizers were brought into the district and began circulating among the nonunion miners. Among the new arrivals were John W. Brown, the well-known Socialist agitator; G. H. Edmunds, a writer for the United Mine Workers Journal; Charles Batley, an experienced field worker for the miner's union; and Mother Mary Jones.¹⁰

⁹M. Michelson, "Sweet Land of Liberty! Feudalism and Civil War in the United States of America, Now!," Everybody's Magazine, XXVIII (May, 1913), pp. 620-622.

¹⁰G. H. Edmunds, "Hot Times in West Virginia," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIII (July 4, 1912), p. 8.

Mother Jones, already a well-known figure to the miners of Kanawha County, arrived in West Virginia in late June of 1912. At that time her appearance in Charleston, the state capital located only a few miles from the strike zone, caused little sensation and went almost unnoticed. As reported by M. Michelson,

An old woman arrived in Charleston. She was old—past eighty, in fact. Her hair was snow white. She was dressed in black and wore a nice little bonnet becoming to one her age. . . . She picked up her belongings, which were tied together in a black shawl and, after shooing away various taxi-drivers and cab men, started for her destination on foot at a pace which, if not rapid, at least showed an ability to cover the ground. . . .

. . . [This was the woman] whom five hundred thousand American miners call[ed] Mother Jones.¹¹

Within a short time Mother Jones was committed to the task of closing down the Cabin Creek collieries. With Vice-President Hayes and organizers Charles Batley and G. H. Edmunds, she tramped up and down the ridges and creek beds of the Cabin Creek district in an effort to organize the men and convince them to join the striking miners of Paint Creek.¹² By then, her presence had become a matter of concern to the operators and her mission was made more difficult as she was denied access to property owned by the coal companies. Mother Jones' determination in these trying circumstances was reported by Harold West:

¹¹Michelson, Everybody's Magazine, XXVIII, p. 624.

¹²Edmunds, United Mine Workers Journal, XXIII, p. 8. See also Mary Harris Jones, Autobiography of Mother Jones, pp. 152-153.

I have been with Mother Jones when she was compelled 'to walk the creek,' having been forbidden to go upon the footpaths that happened to be upon the property of the companies and denied even the privilege of walking along the railroad track although hundreds of miners and others were walking on it at that time. She was compelled to keep to the county road although it was in the bed of the creek and the water was over her ankles. . . . I was told [by one of the company guards] that she was an old 'she devil' and that she would receive no 'courtesies' there, that she was responsible for all the trouble that had occurred, and that she would receive no consideration from the companies.

. . . I was with her when she was denied the 'privilege' of going up the footway to the house of one of the miners in order to get a cup of tea. It was then afternoon, she had walked several miles and was faint, having had nothing to eat since an early breakfast. But that did not shut her mouth. She made the speech she had arranged to make to the men who had arranged to hear her.¹³

By early August the United Mine Workers were able to close down the mines in the Cabin Creek field, and there is little doubt that Mother Jones played a major role in extending the strike into that district. She had made several trips into the Cabin Creek area to talk to the miners; her speeches, reported the United Mine Workers Journal, had created much excitement.¹⁴ On the afternoon of August 6, she held a meeting at the town of Eksdale, the site of one of the largest collieries in the Cabin Creek field. Following her speech the men were organized into a union; the next day they were discharged from their jobs. It was this event, according to John W. Brown writing in the union's journal,

¹³West, The Survey, XXX, p. 49.

¹⁴Brown, United Mine Workers Journal, XXIII, p. 2.

that resulted in the formation of a permanent union organization in Cabin Creek and the spread of the strike into that field.¹⁵ Within a short time the other miners began to lay down their tools and join the strikers. As the men left their jobs they were evicted from their company-owned houses; the United Mine Workers established tent colonies at Holly Grove and Mossey to house the strikers.¹⁶

In the meantime, the strike in the Paint Creek field had taken a more violent turn. The Paint Creek Colliery Company had begun moving in a large force of Baldwin-Felts Detectives to serve as mine guards even before negotiations between the company and the union had broken down. Once the strike had been called, the Baldwin-Felts guards, armed with an injunction against the miners, evicted the strikers from their homes on the company's property. A United Mine Workers tent colony was established at Banner Hollow. On June 5, an armed clash between the miners and the Baldwin-Felts guards occurred at the strike camp; one miner was killed and several others wounded. As a result of this incident, nine mine guards were indicted for murder.¹⁷ Within a short period the Paint

¹⁵Ibid., There seemed to be some confusion as to exactly when the strike began in the Cabin Creek field. Mother Jones claimed that some of the miners in that area had already quit work. She was invited to come into the district for the purpose of officially establishing a local union. She said she went because none of the other organizers dared go because of their fear of assault by mine guards. She chose the town of Eksdale because it was an incorporated village; therefore, she could not be prevented from holding a meeting on the grounds that she was trespassing on company property. Jones, Autobiography, pp. 152-156.

¹⁶Michelson, Everybody's Magazine, XXVIII, p. 627.

¹⁷Brown, United Mine Workers Journal, XXIII, p. 2.

Creek district became virtually a war zone with each side erecting fortifications and collecting arms. Sporadic fighting continued between strikers and mine guards throughout June and July.¹⁸

On July 26, a major battle between miners and company guards was fought at Mucklow, one of the company towns evacuated by the miners and subsequently fortified by the Baldwin-Felts Detectives. In the words of M. Michelson, "It was an organized army that moved on the guards' town this time, an army divided into squads and companies under company commanders. Each miner soldier wore a white handkerchief bound about his coat sleeve."¹⁹ The fighting, which began in the morning, lasted throughout the day. At least one miner and two mine guards were killed. This incident led to a declaration of martial law in Paint Creek by West Virginia's Governor Glasscock, and a detachment of the state militia was withdrawn from a summer encampment and sent into the strike zone.²⁰

With the militia in the area peace temporarily returned to the Paint Creek field. The state troops made an attempt to disarm both strikers and mine guards and large quantities of weapons were collected from both sides. By late August the state government in Charleston concluded that the situation was well-in-hand, and, although neither the

¹⁸Michelson, Everybody's Magazine, XXVIII, pp. 622-624.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 626.

²⁰The New York Times, July 27, 1912, p. 1.

United Mine Workers nor the mine operators gave any indication of a willingness to compromise on the strike question itself, the militia could be safely withdrawn and the martial law edict revoked.²¹

The state troops had not completely left the field before there were renewed clashes between the striking miners and the company guards as the operators began to import nonunion labor into the field in an effort to end the strike. On September 2, Governor Glasscock ordered additional companies of the militia into the strike zone and declared that a "state of war" existed in the Cabin Creek field.²² Whereas before, the miners had welcomed the troops, whom they believed would perform their duties in an impartial manner, this time there was widespread conviction that the militia was to be employed in providing protection for the men the operators were importing in an attempt to reopen the mines. United Mine Workers' officials also accused the military authorities of arbitrarily arresting their organizers and harassing strikers while disregarding violations of the law on the part of the Baldwin-Felts Detectives. In addition, a charge was made that the militia confiscated a shipment of the United Mine Workers Journal.

Within four days of the governor's proclamation of the renewal of martial law in the Cabin Creek field, Mother Jones announced her intention of holding a demonstration in front of the state capital building in

²¹West, The Survey, XXX, pp. 44-45.

²²"Our Strike in West Virginia," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIII (September 12, 1912), p. 1.

Charleston for the purpose of denouncing the governor's action and to demand an end to the hated mine guard system.²³ On September 7, a crowd of some five thousand, composed mostly of strikers, gathered in front of the state capitol building. The governor, fearing the meeting would only serve to further complicate the situation, cordoned off the capitol grounds with troops. The strikers retreated to the Kanawha County courthouse where Mother Jones and several other union leaders spoke to them.²⁴ According to her own testimony before the United States Commission on Industrial Relations a few years later, she told the strikers that they could not look to Governor Glasscock for relief from harassment by the military or the Baldwin-Felts mine guards. She advised the miners to keep out of the saloons, to save their money and use it to buy guns to protect their families. "They bought guns," she told the Commission on Industrial Relations: "They went to every store in town and bought the guns and put them on their shoulders and went off with them."²⁵

In the meantime, Governor Glasscock invited United Mine Workers' President John P. White, who had recently arrived in West Virginia, and other union officials to an assembly of civil and commercial leaders of the state to convene in Charleston on September 26, for the purpose of

²³Ibid.

²⁴"A Great Demonstration," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIII (September 12, 1912), p. 1.

²⁵U. S., Commission on Industrial Relations, Final Report and Testimony Submitted to Congress by the Commission on Industrial Relations, 1916, XI, p. 10629.

discussing an industrial dispute act to be presented to the next session of the state legislature. The mine operators were also asked to attend, and the union leaders were hopeful that out of the conference would evolve a plan for ending the strike. When it was learned, however, that the mining companies had no intention of permitting any discussion of the present conflict in the coal fields, a decision was made by union officials to boycott the meeting. President White informed the governor,

We were led to believe that the conference called by the governor was for the purpose of discussing the present strike. . . .

We are much disappointed that this conference does not contemplate such discussion and in view of this fact, we have nothing to discuss at this time. We wish to say, however, that we are anxious and willing to meet the operators in joint conference at any time.²⁶

When the meeting was called to order on the afternoon of September 26, the mine operators ended all chance of union participation when they announced that their "presence . . . [was] not to be taken as recognition of the United Mine Workers of America."²⁷ In the resulting confusion, a motion to adjourn was made and carried.

The presence of large numbers of the state's most influential citizens in Charleston was an opportunity not to be lost by the United Mine Workers--nor by Mother Jones. While she took no active part in the negotiations between the governor and union leadership in their effort

²⁶"Our Strike in West Virginia," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIII (September 26, 1912), p. 1.

²⁷Ibid.

to salvage the meeting, Mother Jones spent a busy day in the capital city. Some four thousand miners journeyed to Charleston in an effort to demonstrate to the public and the state government the union's strength. In the morning, Mother Jones talked to a large group of these strikers near the capitol building while Vice-President Hayes spoke to another a few blocks away. Later in the day, she organized a parade of over one hundred miners' children, who, led by the petite, gray-haired old woman and followed by a brass band, marched up and down the streets of the city, carrying banners inscribed with such slogans as "We are the Babies That Sleep in the Woods," and "We want to go to School and Not to the Mines."²⁸ The sight of the ragged children was no doubt effective since union leaders pointed out to watching crowds that these were the children who were forced to spend their nights in the open since the strike had begun.²⁹

With the strike in the Paint Creek area in its fourth month and with no hope of settlement in the near future, Mother Jones undertook a tour of the state in an effort to arouse public sentiment that would force the mine operators to settle the strike. Outside the strike zone, in Wheeling, a crowd estimated at nearly two thousand stood in a driving rain to listen to her denounce the mine operators and tell of the brutality of the Baldwin-Felts Detectives. The United Mine Workers Journal enthusiastically reported:

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

Great applause greeted her. The remarkable woman, nearly seventy-seven years of age, took the platform and proceeded to 'business' as she called it with all the vim and vigor of a younger person. She told of the conditions in the mining camps, how men were beaten, women mistreated, how the coal companies 'owned' all the public highways and compelled women, in going from place to place to wade creeks with water up to their waist. She said that she had thus been compelled to wade. She described the mine guards as 'bloodhounds' and insisted that they were thugs and brutes, hired by the coal companies merely to keep the miners in subjection, in a state of peonage. She said that miners were not allowed to get off trains. She told of meetings that had been broken up, homes that had been destroyed, families that had been excited, men that had been killed and women and children outraged.³⁰

Mother Jones told her audience of the strikers' demands, which included the abolition of the mine guard system, the right to patronize independent merchants rather than the company stores, and recognition of the union as the legitimate bargaining agent for the miners. She asked all those in favor of calling a special session of the state legislature to pass laws which would force the mine operators to accept these demands to vote "aye." "An avalanche of 'ayes' responded. Calling for the negative there was dead silence."³¹

In early November, Mother Jones continued her travels and, along with Vice-President Hayes and John W. Brown, left West Virginia for New York City. On November 18, a meeting was scheduled in the Cooper Union auditorium with Mother Jones billed as the principal speaker. The purpose of the meeting, which was sponsored by the United Mine Workers,

³⁰"Mother Jones Thrills Thousands," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIII (September 26, 1912), p. 2.

³¹Ibid.

was to warn union sympathizers in New York of the "kidnapping methods" used by local employment agencies in obtaining workers to go to West Virginia to replace the miners who were on strike.³² Mother Jones told the audience how unemployed men were hired in New York and not advised that they were going to be used in a campaign to break a strike. They were then spirited into West Virginia by the coal companies and held virtually prisoners by the Baldwin-Felts mine guards in order to keep them from escaping and joining the strikers. She also related her now familiar story of the terrible conditions under which miners had to live and labor in West Virginia.³³

After returning from New York, Mother Jones continued her work among the striking miners of Kanawha County. Despite the presence of the militia—or perhaps because of it—clashes between miners and company guards became more frequent. Some of the men, those from the Paint Creek field, had been out of work for more than seven months and there was evidence that their will to continue the struggle was beginning to lag. It was in such situations that Mother Jones was at her best, and throughout the latter part of December she traveled up and down the Paint Creek and Cabin Creek fields admonishing the men to hold fast in the face of ever-mounting pressure from the coal companies and mine guards.³⁴

³²"Mine Workers Hold Meeting," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIII (February 27, 1913), p. 1.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Paul P. Paulsel, "Our Strike in West Virginia," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIII (January 2, 1913), p. 1.

She told the miners to defend their homes by force when necessary, but advised them, according to one witness, to "keep strictly within the law and protect the company's property instead of doing anything to injure it."³⁵ On December 21, she spoke to the striking miners at Eksdale and on the following day she appeared in the strike colony at Holly Grove. Paul P. Paulsel, writing in the United Mine Workers Journal, claimed she was received with enthusiasm at both places:

It was interesting to note how these oppressed miners worship this venerable old fighter. They have confidence in her and believe that their cause is safe in her hands. . . . We have never attended any meeting where such intense interest was shown.³⁶

In her characteristic fashion, Mother Jones chastised the men for consuming too much whiskey; she told them that in order to win the strike they would have to have "strong bodies and clear minds."³⁷ She advised them not to become cowardly because of their fear of local law enforcement officers and mine guards. One observer captured the secret of Mother Jones' effectiveness in such speeches to the miners when, after hearing her in West Virginia, he wrote:

She might have been any coal miner's wife ablaze with righteous fury when her brood was in danger. Her voice shrilled as she shook her fist at the coal operators, the mine guards, the union officials, and all others responsible for the situation. She prayed and cursed and pleaded, raising her clenched and trembling hands, asking heaven to bear witness. She wore long, very full skirts and a

³⁵West, The Survey, XXX, p. 50.

³⁶Paulsel, United Mine Workers Journal, XXIII, p. 1.

³⁷Ibid.

black shawl, and her tiny bonnet bobbed up and down as she harangued the crowd. The miners loved it and laughed, cheered, hooted, and even cried as she spoke to them.³⁸

Shortly after the turn of the year, Mother Jones left West Virginia for the second time since coming to the state to participate in the strike. "I decided to call the attention of the national government to conditions in West Virginia," she wrote in her autobiography.³⁹ "I borrowed one hundred dollars and went out and billed meetings in Cincinnati, Columbus [and] Cleveland. . . ."⁴⁰ From these cities she and Vice-President Hayes went to Washington, D. C., in an effort to initiate a federal investigation of the West Virginia strike. In Washington, she talked to labor union and government officials, including former United Mine Workers' Secretary-Treasurer, Congressman W. B. Wilson of Pennsylvania.⁴¹ On the night of January 10, 1913, she spoke to what was described as a large and enthusiastic crowd at a meeting in Armory Hall arranged by Congressman Wilson.⁴² Mother Jones told the audience,

³⁸Ralph Chaplin, Wobbly: The Rough and Tumble Story of an American Radical, p. 120.

³⁹Jones, Autobiography, p. 160.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Apparently, the United Mine Workers had reached the conclusion that a federal investigation of the strike, or even the threat of an investigation, would bring pressure on West Virginia officials to force a settlement. As early as August of 1912, Congressman Wilson had submitted a resolution in the House calling for the appointment of a special Congressional committee to investigate conditions in the Paint Creek coal field. However, the resolution was allowed to die in the Committee on Rules. U. S., Congressional Record, 62d. Cong., 2d. Sess., 1912, XLVII, Part II, p. 11346.

⁴²"Our Strike in West Virginia," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIII (January 23, 1913), p. 2.

which included many members of Congress, that the state government in West Virginia was in the hands of the mine owners. Consequently, the civil liberties of the striking miners were being totally disregarded by state authorities. In her fiery manner she continued:

This is the seat of a great republican form of government. If such crimes against the citizens of the state of West Virginia go unrebuked by the government, I suggest we take down the flag that stands for constitutional government, and run up a banner, saying this is the flag of the money oligarchy of America.⁴³

The United Mine Workers Journal predicted that because of Mother Jones' reputation for honesty in her dealings with federal officials an investigation of the coal strike would soon be under way.⁴⁴

Throughout the fall and early winter sporadic clashes continued between company guards and miners in the militia occupied strike zone, especially in the Paint Creek area. Miners were accused of murder, of destroying company property, and, at least on one occasion, of firing on the state militia. A few strikers had been sentenced to terms in the state penitentiary by military court-martial for their alleged involvement in a number of these incidents; however, charges against them were dismissed by Governor Glasscock in early January of 1913.⁴⁵ In the

⁴³Jones, Autobiography, p. 160.

⁴⁴"Our Strike in West Virginia," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIII (January 23, 1913), p. 3.

⁴⁵Mother Jones claimed that the release of the miners sentenced by the military court was a direct consequence of the accusations she made against West Virginia officials in her speech in Washington on February 10, 1913. It is true that the men were pardoned shortly after this, on February 12. Jones, Autobiography, p. 161.

meantime, the operators stood firm in their refusal to negotiate with the union and continued their efforts to break the strike by importing nonunion men to work the mines. Nor was the union ready to surrender. District 17 of the United Mine Workers held its annual convention in Charleston in mid-January and the delegates voted to continue the strike.⁴⁶

As the strike in the Paint Creek field moved into its seventh month a series of events occurred which resulted in a virtual civil war between mine guards and strikers. On February 7, 1913, Quin Morgan, owner of the largest colliery operations in Paint Creek, and a number of mine guards attacked the strike colony at Holly Grove in an armored train. The train, nicknamed the "Bull Moose Special" by the miners, carried several machine guns which were fired into the strikers' camp. One miner was killed, and at least one other resident wounded.⁴⁷ The strikers were enraged by this apparently senseless act and began making plans to retaliate. Some three days after the attack on Holly Grove fifty or sixty miners attempted to storm the fortifications of the Paint Creek Colliery Company at Mucklow.⁴⁸ In the ensuing battle sixteen men--twelve miners and four mine guards--were killed. The army of strikers besieging Mucklow cut the telegraph lines in order to prevent the Baldwin-Felts mine guards from calling for the militia.⁴⁹

⁴⁶"Our Strike in West Virginia," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIII (January 23, 1913), pp. 1-2.

⁴⁷Mrs. Fremont (Cora) Older, "Last Day of the Paint Creek Court Martial," The Independent, LXXIV (May 15, 1913), p. 1085. See also The New York Times, June 16, 1913, p. 4.

⁴⁸Older, The Independent, LXXIV, p. 1085.

⁴⁹The New York Times, February 11, 1913, p. 9.

The attack by the miners on Mucklow brought immediate repercussions from state authorities. Four additional companies of militia were sent into the strike zone. The new governor, Henry Hatfield, who had recently succeeded Governor Glasscock, ordered the military authorities to arrest all those responsible for the Mucklow incident. By February 11, the militia was able to restore a semblance of order to the Paint Creek district. Fifty-one strikers and United Mine Workers agitators, including two prominent Socialists who had been working with the miners during the strike, J. F. Parsons and John W. Brown, had been arrested and were awaiting trial before a military tribunal.⁵⁰

Upon learning of the tragic turn of events, Mother Jones left Washington and arrived in West Virginia a few days after the Mucklow incident. At the towns of Boomer and Long Acre in the Paint Creek military zone, she discussed the situation with local union leaders. It was decided that she should lead a delegation of miners to Charleston in an effort to interview the governor and lodge a formal protest before the state legislature against the arrest of the strikers and union agents by the military.⁵¹ Mother Jones and her entourage of miners arrived in Charleston on February 13. The miners invaded the state capitol building in their desire to lay their case before the governor and the legislature. Police were called in, however, and the building was cleared of the demonstrators.⁵²

⁵⁰The New York Times, February 12, 1913, p. 4.

⁵¹Jones, Autobiography, p. 162.

⁵²The New York Times, February 14, 1913, p. 9.

Mother Jones had meanwhile registered in a local hotel; she did not accompany the strikers to the capitol for fear her presence would prejudice their case.⁵³ Shortly after the incident at the state building involving the strikers and the police, she was arrested by civil authorities and placed under guard on a train to be returned to the Paint Creek district where she was surrendered to the military. C. H. Boswell, the editor of the pro-union Charleston Labor Argus, along with Frank Batley and Paul J. Paulson, two United Mine Workers' organizers, were also taken into custody in Charleston and returned to the Paint Creek military zone.⁵⁴

By mid-February, some one hundred and fifty persons were in the custody of military authorities on a variety of charges growing out of the attack on Mucklow. Forty-nine of the prisoners, including the six agitators--Mother Jones, Batley, Paulson, Boswell, Parsons, and Brown--were charged with being accessories before the fact and with conspiracy to murder in the death of one Fred Bobitt, a bookkeeper for the Paint

⁵³Jones, Autobiography, p. 162.

⁵⁴The New York Times, February 14, 1913, p. 9. The state later denied that Mother Jones or any of the others arrested at this time in Charleston were done so on the orders of Governor Hatfield. The state contended that they were arrested under warrants issued by a Charleston Justice of the Peace, who, acting under his own initiative, ordered the prisoners returned to the strike zone. They were then re-arrested by military authorities because of their presence in a district during an insurrection in which they had allegedly participated. U. S., Congress, Senate, Insurrection and Martial Law, Opinions of the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia in the Cases of Ex Rel. Mays v. Brown, Warden of State Penitentiary, and In Re Mary Jones, Charles H. Boswell, Charles Batley, and Paul J. Paulson, 63d. Cong., 1st. Sess., Sen. Doc. 43, 1913, p. 36.

Creek Colliery Company who was killed at Mucklow.⁵⁵ Mother Jones was incarcerated under guard in a rooming house. The forty-eight others accused were housed in the local jail at Paint Creek Junction. Preparations were made for their trial before a military tribunal.⁵⁶

In the meantime, attorneys for the United Mine Workers initiated a test case in the Circuit Court of Appeals for Kanawha County challenging the right of the military to try Mother Jones and the other three agitators arrested in Charleston. The union based its case on the grounds that the civil courts of the county, including those in the so-called Paint Creek "war zone," were open and able to transact business at the time the arrests were made. Hence, if the accused were to be tried at all, they should be tried before a civil rather than a military court. It was also maintained that their arrest in Charleston and subsequent deportation to the Paint Creek military zone constituted an illegal act.⁵⁷ The union won the first round of the appeal when the Supreme Court of West Virginia ruled that the military authorities had to produce Mother Jones and the other defendants before the Circuit Court on February 26.⁵⁸

⁵⁵The New York Times, February 14, 1913, p. 9.

⁵⁶Mrs. Fremont (Cora) Older, "Answering a Question," Collier's Weekly, LI (April 19, 1913), pp. 28-29.

⁵⁷U. S., Congress, Senate, Insurrection and Martial Law, Opinions of the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia in the Cases of Ex Rel. Mays v. Brown, Warden of State Penitentiary, and In Re Mary Jones, Charles H. Boswell, Charles Batley, and Paul J. Paulson, 63 Cong., 1st. Sess., Sen. Doc. 43, 1913, pp. 37-38.

⁵⁸The New York Times, February 26, 1913, p. 9.

However, on March 12, 1913, Judge Samuel B. Littlepage handed down a decision for the Circuit Court allowing the continuation of the military trials. The judge noted in his decision that under the Constitution of the State of West Virginia the governor had the authority to declare martial law to prevent insurrection or riot and to establish, in martial law districts, military commissions to try offenders. Judge Littlepage also cited recent decisions by the West Virginia Supreme Court which permitted military trials in earlier martial law cases originating in the strike zone. While the judge expressed sympathy for the prisoners, he claimed his court had no jurisdiction in the present cases.⁵⁹

Undaunted by the failure of the suit in the Circuit Court to secure her release, Mother Jones, along with the other agitators, sought to capitalize on the situation and use it to focus national attention on the conflict in West Virginia. The governor, perhaps realizing that the trial of the old labor leader on a charge of conspiracy to murder—a charge which carried a possible sentence of death—would make his administration appear ridiculous, offered Mother Jones amnesty on the condition that she leave the state. With her usual flare for the dramatic, she curtly refused.⁶⁰ She told one reporter, "I can raise just as much hell in jail as anywhere. . . ." ⁶¹ The New York Times quoted her as saying,

⁵⁹The New York Times, March 13, 1913, p. 3.

⁶⁰The New York Times, March 11, 1913, p. 1.

⁶¹Older, Collier's Weekly, LI, p. 28.

"I haven't long to live anyhow. My death would call the attention of the whole United States to conditions in West Virginia. It would be worthwhile for that reason. I fear, though, that I shall not be executed."⁶² Six of the defendants, including Mother Jones, attempted to dramatize their case by failing to enter a plea before the court. Nor would they allow themselves to be represented by counsel. John W. Brown made the reasons for their position clear in a letter to his wife:

This case cannot be settled until it has reached the bar of the nation's conscience. In order to do this, the sleepy old public must have another victim. We boys have our minds made up to go to the pen; this will give the lawyers a ground to test the case before the Supreme Court and we will trust our comrades to keep up the legation.⁶³

The trial of the forty-nine prisoners began in mid-March. The testimony against Mother Jones, which according to one source occupied the last several days of the proceedings, consisted largely of reports of speeches she allegedly made to striking miners in the Paint Creek military zone.⁶⁴ The prosecution, alluding to the battle between strikers and mine guards at Mucklow, attempted to establish that Mother Jones "made fiery speeches which . . . kindled the courage of the striking miners so that they fought with mine guards, a number of whom were killed."⁶⁵ Mrs. Fremont (Cora) Older, an observer at the trial, reported that

⁶²The New York Times, March 11, 1913, p. 1.

⁶³"The Constitution in a Labor War," The Independent, XLVI (April 5, 1913), p. 756.

⁶⁴Older, The Independent, LXXIV, p. 1086.

⁶⁵The New York Times, March 11, 1913, p. 1.

"a witness was called whose memory had been refreshed . . . by consulting a notebook. He began to quote Mother Jones' speeches. I expected something blood-curdling. Mother Jones was as mild as a progressive."⁶⁶ The defense attorney, who was appointed by the court over the objection of Mother Jones and the other five agitators, argued that the death of Bobitt and the others at Mucklow was not the result of speeches made by Mother Jones or any of the defendants. The real cause of the crime, he claimed, could be found in the poor living conditions, the brutal guard system, and the peonage to which the miners were subjected. Bobitt died, the defense concluded, as the consequence of an industrial civil war.⁶⁷ On March 14, 1913, the military commission announced it had reached a verdict and would communicate its findings to Governor Hatfield for his confirmation before it would be made public. Mother Jones and the other prisoners remained in custody pending the governor's decision.⁶⁸

The military trial of Mother Jones and the other agitators did not escape the notice of the nation's press; by late March, it was obvious that editorial opinion throughout the country was united in the belief that the trials in West Virginia were highly irregular. Wrote The Houston Post: "This thing of trying civilians by court-martial is a dangerous proceeding, for, if allowed, there is hardly any limit to its abuse."⁶⁹ In a summary of editorial views The Literary Digest quoted The Buffalo Express as saying:

⁶⁶Older, The Independent, LXXIV, p. 1086.

⁶⁷Ibid., pp. 1087-1088.

⁶⁸The New York Times, March 15, 1913, p. 4.

⁶⁹Editorial in The Houston Post, March 21, 1913, p. 6.

The United States is at peace with all the countries of the world. Within our own borders there is no strife of which the Federal Government has taken cognizance. Yet in West Virginia, a State military commission may pass its judgement of life or death on persons who are accused of murder in connection with the strike riots in the Kanawha mining district. Among the defendants is Mother Jones, 'the angel of the miners.' The issue to be decided by a court-martial in her case is . . . the right of free speech. . . . In West Virginia . . . [this question] is to be decided according to military practices.⁷⁰

According to The Independent, The New York Evening Post found the military trial of civilians in West Virginia to be a "vicious practice."⁷¹

Another New York newspaper, The Evening World, observed that "West Virginia does what the United States cannot do, it suspends the civil law in time of peace."⁷² The Independent concluded that after carefully sampling the pulse of the nation's press it found a widespread tendency on the part of editorial observers to sympathize with the plea of the defendants that they were being denied their constitutional right of fair trial.⁷³

Other critics of the West Virginia trials were soon heard. In late February, 1913, the United Mine Workers Journal published an article by Eugene V. Debs, the acknowledged leader of the Socialist Party of America,

⁷⁰"The Constitution in a Labor War," The Independent, XLVI, pp. 757-758.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 758.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid.

protesting the arrest of Mother Jones by West Virginia authorities.⁷⁴

In early May, the Socialists announced they would undertake an investigation of conditions in the state's coal fields. A committee composed of Debs, Victor Berger--the famed Milwaukee Socialist--and Adolph Germer was named to conduct the inquiry.⁷⁵ Debs himself spent several weeks in the strike zone. He exhorted the miners to stand firm and urged the craft unions of the state to go on strike in protest against the treatment of the Kanawha County strikers.⁷⁶ In late May, the committee made public its findings. Interestingly enough, while the Socialists condemned military rule in the strike zone, they exonerated Governor Hatfield from blame in the martial law trials.⁷⁷

The repercussions over the military trials extended even to the United States Senate. In August of 1912, Congress had demonstrated little interest in a resolution proposed by Representative W. B. Wilson calling for an investigation of the conditions existing in the Paint Creek strike zone. The arrest and court-martial of Mother Jones stirred Congress out of its lethargy. On April 2, 1913, Republican Senator Robert W. Kern of Indiana submitted to the Senate a resolution similar to the one proposed by Congressman Wilson the previous year. Kern's

⁷⁴Eugene V. Debs, "Arrest of Mother Jones," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIII (February 27, 1913), p. 1.

⁷⁵The New York Times, May 12, 1913, p. 18.

⁷⁶Ray Ginger, The Bending Cross: A Biography of Eugene V. Debs, pp. 320-321.

⁷⁷The New York Times, June 4, 1913, p. 5.

resolution called for an extensive investigation by the Committee on Labor and Education into the Paint Creek coal strike. The resolution was referred to the Committee on Audit and Control of the Contingent Expenses of the Senate.⁷⁸

Even before Senator Kern introduced his measure on the floor of the Senate, the rumor of a possible federal inquiry drastically altered the situation in West Virginia. The United Mine Workers were now confident of public support due to the adverse publicity given West Virginia officials as a consequence of the martial law trials. In mid-March, shortly after the end of the Mother Jones court-martial, President White arrived in West Virginia and announced that the miner's union intended to initiate a state-wide coal strike to begin on April 1.⁷⁹ Governor Hatfield, faced by the threat of a Senate investigation on one hand and a state-wide coal strike on the other, left Charleston on March 18, for the Paint Creek and Cabin Creek strike zone in an effort to resolve the conflict there. Although he condemned the United Mine Workers' organizers as troublemakers, he announced he was in the area to assure the miners

⁷⁸In brief, the Kern resolution asked for an investigation into the Paint Creek coal field situation for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not: 1) a system of peonage existed among the miners in the Paint Creek district, 2) individuals were being denied access to post offices, 3) the immigration laws of the United States were being violated, 4) the Commissioner of Labor or any other official of the Federal Government could be of service in bringing about a settlement of the strike, 5) individuals were being convicted and punished in violation of the laws of the United States. U. S., Congress, Congressional Record, 63d. Cong., 1st. Sess., I, Part I, p. 164.

⁷⁹The New York Times, March 19, 1913, p. 3.

that they would receive justice from the state government. He said he would stay until the strike was over.⁸⁰ Within a few days, the governor began to release the military prisoners tried by the military court at Paint Creek Junction. By March 21, twenty-nine of the original forty-nine prisoners had been freed unconditionally; however, Mother Jones and the other five agitators remained in custody.⁸¹ On March 24, the governor revoked the martial law edict and began to remove the state militia from the Paint Creek field.⁸²

In the meantime, President White revealed that an agreement had been reached between the United Mine Workers and the Paint Creek Colliery Company. White said that the company had consented to grant the miners their principal demands, including the right to maintain a union. The miners' leader did not, however, indicate when the men would return to work as there were strikes still being waged in other fields and there existed the possibility that the strike sentiment could spread throughout the entire state.⁸³

Both President White and Governor Hatfield now turned their attention to the collieries along Cabin Creek. On April 14, the governor applied pressure on the operators to settle their differences with their employees. He publicly advised the coal companies to concede to the miners the right

⁸⁰The New York Times, March 19, 1913, p. 3.

⁸¹The New York Times, March 22, 1913, p. 1.

⁸²The New York Times, March 25, 1913, p. 11.

⁸³The New York Times, March 23, 1913, III, p. 11.

to hire checkweightmen, to grant the men a nine-hour work day, to abolish the requirement that employees purchase supplies at the company stores, and to promise there would be no discrimination against workers for belonging to a union. In deference to the operators, the West Virginia governor reminded the miners that their wages were, on the average, higher than those paid in other states. The governor admitted that the miners had a just grievance in their criticism of the mine guard system, but pointed out that it had been abolished by the recent session of the state legislature.⁸⁴

Less than a week later, on April 22, Governor Hatfield addressed a special convention of the United Mine Workers' District 17 meeting in Charleston for the purpose of considering whether or not to accept his plan for ending the strike. The West Virginia governor told the delegates, "I want you to accept the proposal I have made, and when you have done so, I intend to use all the power of my office in enforcing compliance with its provisions by both operator and miner."⁸⁵ After discussing the governor's plan in secret session, the convention accepted the settlement. On April 27, 1913, Thomas Cairns, the president of District 17, announced that the strike in the Paint Creek and Cabin Creek fields was at an end and all idle men would be requested to return to work immediately.⁸⁶

⁸⁴The New York Times, April 15, 1913, p. 7.

⁸⁵The New York Times, April 23, 1913, p. 1.

⁸⁶The New York Times, April 28, 1913, p. 2.

There can be little question but that Governor Hatfield was motivated to a great extent in his efforts to end the strike by the threat of the Senate investigation poised by the Kern resolution. Senator Kern--as was noted previously--introduced his resolution on April 12. This was before the governor announced his plan for the settlement of the strike. In addition, West Virginia officials had no doubt been aware for some time prior to this that such a resolution was in the offing.

In the debate over Senator Kern's proposal, which began on May 9, the name of Mother Jones played a prominent role. In his opening remarks, the Indiana Senator informed his colleagues that he had recently learned of the trial and imprisonment of Mother Jones. There was little doubt, the Senator noted, but that the trial of civilians before a military commission--in an area where the civil courts were open and able to transact business--was quite out of the ordinary. The Senator continued:

. . . to me the most startling fact bearing on the subject under discussion was this; here was a proceeding not only unusual, but almost unheard of being carried out almost within sight of the capital of West Virginia and within 300 miles of the nation's capital. One of the best known women in America--a woman past her eightieth year--a woman known and loved by millions of the working people of America for the promotion of whose welfare and for the amelioration of whose condition she has dedicated her life--a woman so honored and believed by these millions that she was known to all of them in every humble home as Mother Jones, was being tried in this unusual way before this mock tribunal.⁸⁷

⁸⁷U. S., Congress, Congressional Record, 63d. Cong., 1st. Sess., 1913, L, Part II, p. 1403.

Senator Kern went on to tell the Senate that he was convinced that West Virginia officials had made a deliberate effort to prevent the national press from accurately reporting the circumstances of the trial. He had evidence that newspapermen had been intimidated. This fact alone, the Senator said, "would justify fully the most searching investigation."⁸⁸ Senator Kern continued his remarks by reading a telegram that Mother Jones had allegedly smuggled out of West Virginia—a document that well illustrated her awareness of the propaganda value inherent in her situation:

Hansford, W. Va., May 4, 1913

Senator Kern, Care Senate Chamber,
Washington, D. C.

From out of the military prison walls, where I have been forced to pass my eighty-first milestone of life, I plead with you for the honor of this Nation. I send you the groans and tears of men, women, and children as I have heard them in this state, and beg you to force the investigation. Children yet unborn will rise and bless you.

Mother Jones⁸⁹

The Indiana Senator concluded by informing his colleagues that the mere hint of a Senate inquiry into the West Virginia affair had brought about the removal of Mother Jones from the Paint Creek district where she had been incarcerated since her trial, but, as yet, had not secured her release from custody. The Senator expressed hope that an investigation

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid.

would be authorized so that those who had been unjustly accused would be vindicated.⁹⁰

Shortly after the debate over the Kern resolution began in the Senate, Mother Jones was brought to Charleston for an interview with Governor Hatfield and then released.⁹¹ The charges against her were apparently dropped. The implication of this development did not escape the notice of Senator Kern. When the debate over his resolution was renewed on May 14, he told the Senate that while Mother Jones might go to her grave never knowing whether the verdict of the military court was that she should live or die, at least the proposed inquiry had already "accomplished the liberation of this woman, who has been unlawfully imprisoned since last January."⁹²

Immediately following her release, Mother Jones left West Virginia for Washington in order to aid Senator Kern in his effort to secure passage of his resolution. On May 14, the second day of the debate, she, along with several other labor leaders, sat in the Senate gallery and listened to the Indiana Senator read a number of affidavits from citizens of West Virginia testifying to conditions in the strike zone. The Senator informed his colleagues of her presence.⁹³ The next day, Mother Jones

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹According to Mother Jones, the governor arranged the interview mainly as an excuse for releasing her from custody in the hope of forestalling the Senate investigation. Jones, Autobiography, pp. 165-167.

⁹²U. S., Congress, Congressional Record, 63d. Cong., 1st. Sess., 1913, I, Part II, p. 1532.

⁹³Ibid.

had interviews with a number of lawmakers, including Senator Kern. According to The Washington Post she told them of the brutality of the mine guards in the strike zone, of the manner in which men were arbitrarily thrown into prison, and how miners were discharged from their jobs because of union membership.⁹⁴ That afternoon, she was again a witness to the discussion in the Senate over the Kern resolution.⁹⁵

As the debate continued, Senator Kern found allies among a number of influential Republican senators. Senator Borah of Idaho told the Senate that an investigation of the military trials in West Virginia was needed in view of preparing legislation to prevent future abuses.⁹⁶ New York's Senator Root observed that the "acts of the officials of the State of West Virginia have been challenged on so high authority . . . that the Senate owes it to the country to make an investigation. . . ."⁹⁷ Senators Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts and Southerland of Utah, reported The New York Times, announced their willingness to support the proposed inquiry.⁹⁸

As could be expected, the main opposition to the Kern resolution came from the two senators who represented West Virginia: William E.

⁹⁴The Washington Post, May 16, 1913, p. 4.

⁹⁵The New York Times, May 16, 1913, p. 2.

⁹⁶U. S., Congress, Congressional Record, 63d. Cong., 1st. Sess., 1913, L, Part II, pp. 1524-1525.

⁹⁷The New York Times, May 28, 1913, p. 3.

⁹⁸The New York Times, May 15, 1913, p. 2.

Chilton and Nathan A. Goff. Senator Chilton referred to the proposal as an unwarranted interference in the affairs of a sovereign state--an act, he claimed, which had little precedent.⁹⁹ Senator Goff, on the other hand, attempted to justify the state's action, especially in connection with the military trial of Mother Jones. He told the Senate:

The name of Mother Jones has been brought into the controversy. Well, I have no fight with Mother Jones. I am sorry that she feels aggrieved. If half the stories they tell about her in West Virginia in reference to this and other strikes are true, she has certainly been--whatever else she may be; grand and good and a friend of the miners she may be--but she has certainly been inciting riot and urging insurrection. She does not deny it. She is the grandmother of them all; she takes pride in it; she is an expert; she is a good talker; she is effective in speaking to great audiences; naturally, she had influence with them. I do not know how it may be in your locality, but in mine for a man on public hustings, or a woman either, to incite people to violence, to insurrection, is a crime; man, woman, or child--who resorts to this is liable to arrest. Mother Jones was arrested. She certainly was. . . . She was tried, yes; she was convicted, doubtless . . . but I see no reason why West Virginia should be criticized for that. . . .¹⁰⁰

Mother Jones was now free and the Paint Creek area was quiet, continued the senator. He said he questioned the motives of anyone who desired to reopen the problem.¹⁰¹

Regardless of the opposition of the two West Virginia senators, the Kern resolution, with a few minor amendments which did not substantially

⁹⁹U. S., Congress, Congressional Record, 63d. Cong., 1st. Sess., 1913, I, Part II, p. 1526.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 1643.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

alter its purpose, was passed by the Senate without a roll call on May 27, 1913.¹⁰² The adopted resolution provided for an investigation of conditions in the Paint Creek district of West Virginia as originally outlined. The inquiry was to be conducted by a subcommittee of the Committee on Labor and Education. Provisions were included for a report to the Senate once the investigation was complete.¹⁰³

It was obvious that Mother Jones played a significant role in bringing about the Senate inquiry—an inquiry that The New York Times said was almost without precedent in the nation's history.¹⁰⁴ While others had been tried and incarcerated by military tribunals, it was her imprisonment that so outraged the conscience of the Senate. Mother Jones was the name most mentioned in debate on the Senate floor. To Senator Kern and others, she had evidently become a symbol of the abuses perpetrated on the miners of West Virginia. Senator Kern himself recognized her importance in prompting the Senate to action. In January of 1914, he credited Mother Jones with bringing about the Senate investigation in a speech he made before the annual convention of the United Mine Workers.¹⁰⁵ Nor was the nation's press ignorant of the role of Mother Jones in forcing

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 1779.

¹⁰³The amended resolution extended the scope of the inquiry by authorizing the committee to investigate: 1) whether or not the Sherman Anti-Trust Act had been violated by either the coal companies or the union, and 2) if either group was guilty of importing firearms into West Virginia. Ibid., p. 1743.

¹⁰⁴The New York Times, May 28, 1913, p. 3.

¹⁰⁵The New York Times, February 1, 1913, II, p. 8.

the investigation. An editorial in the July, 1913, issue of Current Opinion referred to her when it observed, "She is in large measure responsible for whatever comes of the investigation Congress decided to make into the West Virginia troubles."¹⁰⁶ The Nation felt that the other issues involved--the denial of access to post offices, the question of peonage, the harassment of strikers by mine guards--would never have, by themselves, prompted the Senate to action.¹⁰⁷

In many ways, however, the Senate investigation itself proved almost anticlimactic.¹⁰⁸ It was the threat of the inquiry which the United Mine Workers were able to use to their fullest advantage. Although the union's struggle for the mine fields of West Virginia was far from over--in fact in late May a new strike had been initiated in the New Rivers district--it had extended its power into one of the most important coal producing areas of the state.¹⁰⁹ With the settlement of the strike in the Paint Creek and Cabin Creek fields, the United Mine Workers of America had scored a major victory.

¹⁰⁶Editorial in Current Opinion, LV (July, 1913), p. 9.

¹⁰⁷"West Virginia Inquiry," The Nation, XCVI (May 29, 1913), p. 359.

¹⁰⁸The Senate subcommittee, after holding extensive hearings in both West Virginia and Washington, issued a report which criticized the trial and imprisonment of strikers and strike leaders by military tribunals. However, it also found fault with the United Mine Workers leadership and blamed a great deal of the West Virginia troubles on their desire to unionize the coal fields of the state. Taft, Organized Labor, p. 259.

¹⁰⁹The New York Times, May 22, 1913, p. 17.

Much of the credit for this victory belonged to Mother Jones. She had proved invaluable in the union's efforts to organize the nonunion Cabin Creek district and spread the strike into that field. During the winter of 1912, when there appeared no hope of an early settlement and the destitute miners were losing heart in their desire to continue the struggle, Mother Jones traveled up and down the ridges and creek beds of the strike zone in a successful effort to bolster the strikers' lagging morale. She spoke to crowds in Washington, New York, and the Mid-West in an attempt to enlist public opinion on the side of the miners. Her appeal on their behalf was heard even in the halls of Congress. When she was arrested and tried on a charge of inciting violence—a charge of which she may or may not have been guilty—she was quick to work this to the advantage of the union's cause. Without Mother Jones it is doubtful that the United States Senate would have shown the interest it did in affairs in West Virginia, an interest that contributed greatly to the union triumph in that state.

CHAPTER IV

THE COLORADO STRIKE OF 1913-1914

In September of 1913, while the issue in West Virginia was still undecided, the United Mine Workers began its second major strike in less than two years when some 8,000 to 10,000 workers walked out of the coal mines in Southern Colorado.¹ Within a short time the struggle in Colorado between the miner's union and the coal operators degenerated into a civil war with much loss of life on both sides; it thus became an issue of national importance. In addition, the fourteen-month strike would deal the union the worst defeat it had suffered in over a decade. It was in such situations that Mother Jones was at her best. Arriving in Colorado shortly before the strike began, the aged labor leader worked furiously to bolster the lagging morale of the strikers and to keep their grievances before the public. When the government of Colorado attempted to silence her, Mother Jones used this as a device to dramatize the miner's plight. As a consequence, she played a major role in winning sympathy among the general public for the union and in maintaining the miners' will to fight.

The problems of the United Mine Workers in Colorado had a long history. As early as 1903, the union had unsuccessfully attempted to organize the state's coal fields and, after a violent strike, had failed.²

¹George P. West, United States Commission on Industrial Relations: Report on the Colorado Strike, p. 31.

²Ibid., pp. 12-13.

In 1908 a drive was launched to organize the miners in the northern part of the state. This campaign was a success because the fields in this area were of little economic importance and the miners, many of whom operated small farms on the side, were not entirely dependent on the coal companies.³

The fields in Southern Colorado were controlled by three large companies: the Rockefeller dominated Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, the Victor American Fuel Company, and the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company. The mines were worked mainly by men of foreign extraction. Of the three companies the largest, the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, had long been noted for its hostility to organized labor. Because of its size, this company was able to play a significant role in determining the labor policies of the others.⁴ The employees of the three companies, numbering some 10,000, represented a polyglot mixture of peoples. In addition to the English-speaking Scotch, Welsh, and Irish, there were Greeks, Poles, Mexicans, and Japanese who had been imported into the state during the attempt to break the strike of 1903. All of these miners lived with their families in camps owned completely by the mining companies.⁵ These conditions made the southern fields extremely difficult to organize.

³Barron B. Beshoar, Out of the Depths; the Story of John R. Lawson, a Labor Leader, pp. 18-49.

⁴West, Report on the Colorado Strike, p. 139.

⁵Samuel Yallen, American Labor Struggles, pp. 205-206.

Nevertheless, by September of 1913, the union felt that it had made enough headway in this area to risk a strike.⁶

The strike call was issued for September 23, 1914. On that day some 8,000 to 10,000 miners left the employment of the mining companies and with their families moved from the company towns to tent colonies established by the United Mine Workers.⁷ The miners' demands included a ten per cent increase in wages, an eight-hour day, pay for extra work in the mines, permission to hire their own checkweightmen, the right to trade in stores other than those owned by the companies, and the recognition of the United Mine Workers as their bargaining agent.⁸ Other issues, however, were involved in the strike. The official report on the strike by the United States Commission on Industrial Relations observed that

Involving as its major issue the demand of the miners for a voice in determining the conditions under which they worked, the Colorado conflict was also a struggle for a voice in determining political and social conditions in the communities where they and their families lived. The strikers passionately felt and believed that they were denied, not only a voice in fixing working conditions within the mines, but that political democracy, carrying with it rights and privileges guaranteed by the laws of

⁶According to Yallen, the United Mine Workers rather reluctantly authorized the strike after several attempts to call a conference between union officials and the companies had failed. The union was in poor financial condition as a result of the long strike in West Virginia the previous year. Ibid., pp. 212-213.

⁷U. S., Congress, House, Report on the Colorado Strike Investigation Made Under House Resolution 387, 63d. Cong., 3d. Sess., Doc. No. 1630, p. 5.

⁸Yallen, American Labor Struggles, p. 213.

the land, had likewise been flouted and repudiated by the owners. It was this latter belief that gave to the strikers that intensity of feeling which impelled them to suffer unusual hardships during their stay in the tent colonies, and which gave to the strike the character more of a revolt by entire communities than of a protest by wage earners only.⁹

At the first evidence of strike sentiment in the summer of 1913, the coal companies imported large numbers of armed men into Colorado from outside the state. These men were subsequently deputized by the sheriffs in the strike zone. In addition, the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company employed the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency to provide guards for the mines. Machine guns and other weapons were supplied to the guards, and rifle pits were dug in the hills surrounding the mines. Observing this activity on the part of the mining companies the Policy Committee of the Colorado District of the United Mine Workers decided to furnish arms openly to the miners. As a consequence the union purchased great quantities of firearms and ammunition both within and outside the state.¹⁰

With mine guards and strikers thus armed, violence was inevitable. On September 24, the day after the strike was initiated, a marshall at the Colorado Fuel Company's Segundo camp was shot from ambush. On October 7, there was a brief exchange of gunfire between strikers and mine guards at the Ludlow strike camp; on October 9, a Ludlow miner was

⁹West, Report on the Colorado Strike, p. 6.

¹⁰Yallen, American Labor Struggles, p. 223.

killed in a similar affair. A week later one striker was killed and a young boy severely wounded when mine guards in an armored car attacked the Forbes tent colony. As a result of these and other incidents, Governor Elias Ammons of Colorado ordered the state militia into the strike zone on October 28.¹¹

Violence did not entirely cease, however, with the arrival of the state troops. On November 8, some ten days after the troops had been ordered into the strike zone, there was a clash between mine guards and strikers at Walsenburg that resulted in the death of three men. The same day a nonunion miner was shot by strikers at Aguilar.¹² Following these incidents an uneasy peace settled over the strike district. In the meantime, Governor Ammons, in an effort to maintain the peace, forbade the state troops to take sides or to aid the companies in the installation of strikebreakers imported from outside Colorado.¹³

Hoping to forestall further violence, Governor Ammons formulated a plan to bring the strike to an end. In November, at Ammons' invitation, United States Secretary of Labor William B. Wilson arrived in Denver to attempt to negotiate a settlement between the miners and their employers. At Wilson's insistence the operators agreed to a conference with representatives of the striking miners providing they were not union officials and providing the question of union recognition would not be raised.

¹¹Ibid., p. 225.

¹²West, Report on the Colorado Strike, p. 111.

¹³Yallen, American Labor Struggles, p. 225.

The conference resulted in an agreement between the parties that the mining companies would submit to all of the strikers' demands except for the wage increase and recognition of the union. However, when the agreement was submitted to the strikers, it was rejected unanimously at a mass meeting.¹⁴

Partly because of the failure of this attempt at a settlement, and partly because of the pressure brought by the business interests of the state, Governor Ammons, on November 28, gave General Chase, the commander of the militia, absolute control over the strike zone. In addition, Ammons withdrew his earlier order forbidding the state troops from participating in any attempt to import strikebreakers from other states.¹⁵ General Chase immediately issued an order suspending civil liberties in the strike district, and scores of strikers were arrested. The result was an increase in incidents of violence and a formal protest by the Colorado State Federation of Labor that there was evidence the state troops were cooperating with the mine operators in their attempt to break the strike.¹⁶

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 226-227.

¹⁵West, Report on the Colorado Strike, p. 115.

¹⁶At the request of the Colorado State Federation of Labor, Governor Ammons authorized a three-man board of inquiry to investigate conditions in the strike zone. The committee, headed by a respected professor of law, reported after extensive hearings that the militia acted in a manner partial to the operators. Yallen, American Labor Struggles, pp. 228-229.

Mother Jones arrived in Colorado shortly before the strike began. Governor Ammons drew attention to her arrival by announcing that she would be prevented from making "incendiary speeches" to the striking coal miners.¹⁷ Upon hearing of the governor's statement, Mother Jones retorted:

When the governor of the state threatened to send troops to keep me from talking . . . it is a sign that something is wrong with him. I defy him. As long as there is breath in my body and the Lord permits me to stay on my feet, I will never cease my campaigns in the interest of humanity.¹⁸

The governor's threat to silence Mother Jones resulted in a wave of protest throughout the state. The United Mine Workers Journal quoted the Denver Express as saying that trying to silence Mother Jones is "like trying to juggle Pike's Peak. It can't be done. Hers is the voice eternal lifted in defense of humanity."¹⁹ The Express also noted that a Colorado suffragette group, the Women's Square Deal Club, formally protested the governor's treatment of Mother Jones. The United Mine Workers Journal duly reported these incidents as part of its campaign to bring discredit on state officials and their actions in the strike.²⁰

¹⁷"Colorado Strike," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIV (October 16, 1913), p. 1.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹"Hers Is the Voice Eternal," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIV (October 16, 1913), p. 2.

²⁰Ibid.

Regardless of the governor's threat, Mother Jones remained far from silent. On the morning of October 7, Mother Jones and John R. Lawson, president of the Colorado District of the United Mine Workers, spoke at the Ludlow tent camp. That afternoon there was a brief fight between mine guards and strikers at the camp. Although there were no fatalities, some eight hundred shots were fired. An official of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, Attorney Jesse G. Northcutt, later blamed Mother Jones for the violence.²¹ Mother Jones, however, denounced the attack on the strike colony as part of an effort by mine operators to start trouble that would result in the militia being sent into the strike zone.²²

In early October, shortly before the militia arrived in the strike district, Mother Jones organized a parade of striking miners and their families to demonstrate the miners' cause before Governor Ammons, who was in Trinidad on a tour of inspection of the strike zone. The parade, with the women and children in the lead, marched past the hotel where the governor was staying. The demonstrators carried banners which read, "A Bunch of Mother Jones' Children;" "Do You Hear the Children Groaning, O Colorado;" "Instead of Going to School We Have to Feed Bloodhounds;" "Let the Public Take Over the Mines;" and "If Uncle Sam Can Run the Post Office Why Not the Mines?"²³ The United Mine Workers Journal reported

²¹U. S. Commission on Industrial Relations, Final Report and Testimony Submitted to Congress by the Commission on Industrial Relations, 1916, VIII, p. 7151.

²²"Mine Guards Precipitate Battle," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIV (October 16, 1913), p. 3.

²³"Our Strike in Colorado," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIV (October 30, 1913), p. 1.

Mother Jones was met at the train this morning by the military escort acting under instructions not to permit her to remain in this district. The detail took charge of Mrs. Jones and her baggage and she was accompanied out of the district under guard after she had been given breakfast.

The step was taken in accordance with my instructions to preserve peace in the district. The presence of Mother Jones here at this time cannot be tolerated. She had planned to go to the Ludlow tent colony of strikers to stop the desertion of union members.

If she returns she will be placed in jail and held incommunicado.²⁸

The deportation of the old labor leader from the strike zone resulted in a furious protest from the leadership of the United Mine Workers. From their international headquarters in Indianapolis, union officials sent a telegram to President Woodrow Wilson expressing opposition to the treatment Mother Jones had received at the hands of the state and asking the president to "intervene and protect the constitutional rights of American citizens."²⁹

In spite of the threat made by General Chase, Mother Jones was determined to return to the strike zone. After remaining in Denver for a few days, on January 12, she boarded a train for Trinidad. When she arrived in the city, she was immediately arrested by a detail of the militia and escorted to nearby San Raphael Hospital in an automobile. According to the United Mine Workers Journal, several hundred strikers

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

"lined the streets and cheered wildly while Mother Jones waved her hand in response."³⁰ General Chase informed Governor Ammons that

On the 11th. of January . . . Mother Jones . . . appeared in Trinidad in defiance of your excellency, with the avowed and proclaimed purpose of stirring up trouble. . . . By your excellency's directions I arrested her and placed her in San Raphael Hospital, a church institution, giving her every comfort, but depriving her of being at large to carry out her incendiary purposes.³¹

Mother Jones' imprisonment in the San Raphael Hospital created a number of problems for both Governor Ammons and General Chase. Several hundred miners in Fremont County informed Governor Ammons that if she were not released immediately, the miners would secure her freedom themselves. Shortly afterwards, General Chase was threatened by a mob of women in the hotel where he was staying.³² On January 21, there occurred in Trinidad what became known as the "Mother Jones Riot." According to General Chase's official report to the governor, a parade of women was organized to protest the imprisonment of Mother Jones. The leaders of the demonstrations secured permission from the general to hold the parade providing they would restrict it to the downtown area and keep away from San Raphael Hospital. In violation of the promise given by their leaders, the general continued, the hundreds of women in the parade, together with

³⁰"Our Strike in Colorado; Mother Jones Re-arrested," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIV (January 15, 1914), p. 1.

³¹General Chase's Report to Governor Ammons, Congressional Record, 63d. Cong., 2d. Sess., LI, Part X, p. 10291.

³²Beshoar, Out of the Depths, p. 131.

a mob of striking miners, started toward the hospital "with loud shouts of their intention to liberate Mother Jones by force."³³ The national guard broke up the parade and a number of persons were arrested.³⁴

General Chase reported that bloodshed was averted only because the troops acted with a great deal of restraint.³⁵ The incident received national publicity when Witt Bowden reported it in The Survey.³⁶

In the meantime, the United Mine Workers began work to secure Mother Jones' release. Meeting in Indianapolis, the international convention of the miners' union passed a resolution paying tribute to Mother Jones and protesting her "illegal imprisonment by the military authorities."³⁷

Horace Hawkins, a legal aid to the United Mine Workers in Colorado, submitted a habeas corpus petition to the Colorado Supreme Court in behalf of Mother Jones. The petition maintained that she was being held without a warrant by the military authorities despite the fact that the civil courts were open. It was further claimed that General Chase had

³³Chase Report, Congressional Record, 63d. Cong., 2d. Sess., LI, Part X, p. 10291.

³⁴Witt Bowden, "New Developments in the Colorado Strike," The Survey, XXXI (February 14, 1914), p. 614.

³⁵Chase Report, Congressional Record, 63d. Cong., 2d. Sess., LI, Part X, p. 10291.

³⁶According to Bowden, four women and a ten-year-old boy received saber wounds at the hands of the state troops. Bowden, The Survey, XXXI, p. 614.

³⁷"Message of Convention to Mother Jones in Prison," The United Mine Workers Journal, XXIV (February 5, 1914), p. 1.

unlawfully superceded the civil law with military authority and that Mother Jones and others were being held incommunicado and denied the rights they were "guaranteed by the federal and state constitutions."³⁸ In spite of Hawkin's eloquent plea, the high court denied the petition on the grounds that a lower court should first pass on the case. Hawkins then sought relief in the district court of Las Animas County where a writ of habeas corpus was denied. The union immediately reapplied to the State Supreme Court.³⁹

While waiting for the verdict of the high court, Mother Jones was taken to Denver where she was released from custody on March 16.⁴⁰ She had spent a total of almost six weeks in San Raphael Hospital. During this time she had received no mail and was allowed to be visited only by her lawyer.⁴¹ Once in Denver, however, she announced she would return to the strike zone within the week. "I fully expect to be arrested and returned to prison, . . ." the fiery old agitator told reporters, "no governor or President can make me abandon my constitutional rights as a citizen to go where I please."⁴²

³⁸"Mother Jones Asks Liberty in High Court," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIV (February 19, 1914), p. 1.

³⁹The New York Times, April 4, 1914, p. 7.

⁴⁰The New York Times, March 17, 1914, p. 9.

⁴¹U. S. Commission on Industrial Relations, Final Report and Testimony, VII, p. 6649.

⁴²The New York Times, March 17, 1914, p. 9.

There were conflicting reports as to the circumstances surrounding Mother Jones' release from custody. According to United Mine Workers' attorney Horace Hawkins, she was brought to Denver and then released by the state in a move to frustrate the union's efforts to secure her freedom through a writ of habeas corpus.⁴³ General Chase, on the other hand, maintained that she requested a conference with the commander of the militia camp in Trinidad to discuss with him some means by which she could leave the hospital "without losing face."⁴⁴ She suggested to the officer that if she were allowed to go to Denver on the pretense of interviewing the governor, she would find some excuse for not returning to the strike zone. The agreement, General Chase claimed, was repudiated by Mother Jones after she arrived in Denver and consulted with the United Mine Workers' leaders. In his report General Chase advised Governor Ammons that Mother Jones had always been free to leave the hospital any time she agreed to stay out of the strike district. Governor Ammons, in the meantime, told the press that he hoped Mother Jones would remain out of Trinidad, for he believed her presence there, "even if she is arrested, will cause bloodshed."⁴⁶ The governor later testified before the United States Commission on Industrial Relations that he begged Mother Jones'

⁴³"Mother Jones Deported," United Mine Workers Journal, XXVI (March 19, 1914), p. 1.

⁴⁴Chase Report, Congressional Record, 63d. Cong., 2d. Sess., LI, Part X, p. 10293.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Washington Post, March 23, 1914, p. 3.

attorney to convince her to not return to Trinidad as her presence there would have "a very bad effect."⁴⁷

After a brief conference with Governor Ammons, Mother Jones remained in Denver about a week and on Sunday, March 22, left to return to the strike zone.⁴⁸ The following morning she was arrested in Walsenburg by the militia for the third time in less than three months and placed in what George P. West described as "an insanitary and rat-infested cell."⁴⁹ General Chase announced that she was to remain in custody until she was willing to leave the strike zone for good.⁵⁰

The United Mine Workers immediately re-instituted habeas corpus proceedings and petitioned the State Supreme Court to take original jurisdiction in the case.⁵¹ The union's attorneys considered this a major test case as they felt that a decision sympathetic to Mother Jones would result in a reversal of the famous Moyer decision of the previous decade. Under the Moyer decision, a product of the strike of 1903, civil law could be suspended in any area where the national guard had been summoned to maintain the peace.⁵² The union naturally felt that a

⁴⁷U. S. Commission on Industrial Relations, Final Report and Testimony, VIII, p. 7169.

⁴⁸Washington Post, March 23, 1914, p. 6.

⁴⁹West, Report on the Colorado Strike, p. 122.

⁵⁰The New York Times, March 24, 1914, p. 1.

⁵¹"Mother Jones Seeks Liberty at Hands of High Court," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIV (April 9, 1914), p. 1.

⁵²West, Report on the Colorado Strike, p. 116.

reversal of this precedent would free their leadership from unwarranted harassment by state officials. The United Mine Workers hoped that the imprisonment of someone of Mother Jones' fame and reputation as a friend of the workingman might result in enough pressure on the high court that the Moyer decision would be overturned.⁵³

In the meantime, Mother Jones did not waste time brooding over her predicament. Realizing the propaganda value inherent in her position, the aged labor leader busied herself by writing a number of letters designed for publication and public consumption. A few of these letters were smuggled out of her prison and received widespread publicity. In her flamboyant style, she wrote,

The courts of Las Animas and Huerfano counties are open and unobstructed in the transition of business, yet Governor Ammons and . . . General Chase refuse to carry me before any court, and refuse to make any charge against me. I ask the press to let the nation know of my treatment, and to say to my friends, whom, thank God, I number by the thousands in the United States and Mexico, that even my incarceration in a damp, underground dungeon will not make me give up the fight in which I am engaged for the liberty and for the rights of the workingman.

Let the nation know and especially my friend General Francisco Villa know, that the great United States of America, which is demanding of him that he release the traitors that he has placed in custody, is now holding Mother Jones incommunicado in an underground cell, surrounded with sewer rats, tin soldiers, and other vermin.⁵⁴

⁵³"Mother Jones Seeks Liberty at Hands of High Court," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIV, p. 1.

⁵⁴Quoted by Beshoar, Out of the Depths, pp. 160-161.

In a letter published in the United Mine Workers Journal she described her quarters in the Walsenburg jail as a "damp underground cell in the basement of a military bull pen."⁵⁵ In the same letter she told her readers that in all her strike experiences she had never seen "horrors equal to those perpetrated by General Chase."⁵⁶

On April 16, two days before the Colorado Supreme Court was to announce its decision concerning her petition for a writ of habeas corpus, Mother Jones was released from the Walsenburg jail. On the same day Governor Ammons ordered the militia to be withdrawn from the strike zone.⁵⁷ To the United Mine Workers these two events represented a major victory and were not without connection. The union's journal reported that Governor Ammons' embarrassment over Mother Jones' imprisonment resulted in his decision to pull the national guard out of the strike district. The union believed that Ammons did not desire to have Mother Jones' case decided by the Supreme Court. As a consequence he released her, and in order to explain her release he was forced to withdraw the state militia. Even so, the United Mine Workers continued its legal action against the state and announced that it planned to ask the Colorado Supreme Court to cite General Chase for contempt for his failure to produce Mother Jones during the habeas corpus proceedings.⁵⁸

⁵⁵"Mother Jones Smuggles Letter Out of Colorado Military Bastille," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIV (April 9, 1914), p. 1.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷The New York Times, April 17, 1914, p. 8.

⁵⁸"Our Colorado Strike: Mother Jones Routs Ammons and His Army," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIV (April 23, 1914), p. 1.

The efforts of the state to keep Mother Jones out of the strike zone may be explained in view of her reputation as a strike leader. Mother Jones came to Colorado on her own initiative; however, the United Mine Workers welcomed her presence and paid her the standard organizer's salary of four dollars a day plus expenses. John McLennan, district president of the miner's union, testified before the United States Commission on Industrial Relations that Mother Jones played a significant role in maintaining the worker's will to continue the strike. The miners, McLennan said, considered Mother Jones "their friend and benefactor."⁵⁹ A July issue of the United Mine Workers Journal described Mother Jones as the greatest single organizing force in Colorado.⁶⁰

State officials, along with the management of the mining companies, were far from ignorant of the power of Mother Jones in a strike situation. General Chase felt that much of the violence that occurred in the strike was a direct result of Mother Jones' influence on the miners. In his report to Governor Ammons, the national guard commander reported that he "confidently believe[d] that most of the murders and other acts of violent crime in the strike region [have] been inspired by this woman's incendiary utterances."⁶¹ Governor Ammons also believed that Mother Jones

⁵⁹U. S. Commission on Industrial Relations, Final Report and Testimony, VII, p. 6524.

⁶⁰"Colorado Corners," United Mine Workers Journal, XXV (July 23, 1914), p. 1.

⁶¹Chase Report, Congressional Record, 63d. Cong., 2d. Sess., II, Part X, p. 10293.

deserved the blame for much of the disorder that accompanied the strike.

"In the early stages of the strike," the governor told the Commission on Industrial Relations,

. . . [Mother Jones] was engaged in making inflammatory speeches. . . . After every single one of them, as my recollection goes, there was a wave of violence. She seemed to exert a tremendous influence over those people down there.⁶²

In a letter to Professor James H. Brewster, the president of the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company, J. W. Welborn, observed that "if we could get rid of Mother Jones and Mr. Frank Hayes [United Mine Workers president] there would be no trouble."⁶³ No doubt both state officials and the management of the mining companies would have felt more comfortable with Mother Jones out of the state.

Shortly after Mother Jones was released from custody, the strike in Colorado degenerated into a virtual civil war between the miners and the coal companies. On April 20, 1914, a small company of militia which had been ordered to remain in the strike zone when the rest of the state troops were withdrawn attacked the Ludlow strike colony. In the fighting that followed three strikers and one young boy, along with two militiamen, were killed. Once in possession of the camp the militia set fire to the tents of the striking miners; eleven children and two women who had huddled in a hole beneath one of the tents were burned to death.

⁶²U. S. Commission on Industrial Relations, Final Report and Testimony, VIII, p. 7169.

⁶³Ibid., p. 6633.

Hundreds of other women and children fled the camp seeking refuge in the surrounding hills or in nearby ranch houses.⁶⁴

From Ludlow the fighting spread to other mining camps. Strikers in the Walsenburg and Trinidad area armed themselves and swarmed over the hills, determined to avenge the deaths of their comrades at Ludlow. The Colorado State Federation of Labor informed President Woodrow Wilson that it had called on labor organizations throughout the state to arm and prepare to defend their rights by force. By April 22, two days after the Ludlow incident, armed strikers were in control of almost the entire coal fields in the southern part of the state. The national guard was once more ordered into the strike zone. Even so, the fighting continued and was ended only with the arrival of federal troops sent into Colorado by President Wilson at the urgent request of Governor Ammons.⁶⁵

Mother Jones was not in Colorado at the time of the Ludlow affair. She had left the state to tour the nation in an effort to enlist public sympathy on the side of the miners and thus bring pressure on the operators to end the strike.⁶⁶ From Colorado she had gone to Washington. Her object was to tell her version of the Colorado story to the House Committee on Mining, which had recently been authorized to make an inquiry into the Colorado situation. In her testimony before the committee she attacked

⁶⁴West, Report on the Colorado Strike, pp. 126-127.

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 133-136.

⁶⁶Mary Harris Jones, The Autobiography of Mother Jones, pp. 195-199.

John D. Rockefeller, Jr., because of his connection with the Colorado mines. "Let Congress tell Rockefeller," she said to the committee, "that we are not going to have a Rockefeller dominated government in this country; that the miners are going to organize; that he must treat with them decently--that is my suggestion for ending the coal strike."⁶⁷ The government of Colorado, Mother Jones continued, was a "government by gunmen."⁶⁸ She felt there would be no end to the troubles in Colorado until the Rockefeller interest recognized the union.⁶⁹

From Washington Mother Jones went to New York City, where, in mid-May, she attempted to obtain an interview with Rockefeller. She told reporters that she believed Rockefeller would see her. She said that she thought he meant well, but had been "misled by bad advisers."⁷⁰ However, Rockefeller returned to her the registered letter she had mailed him; across the face of the unopened letter was written the word "refused." Making the most of this the old labor agitator sarcastically told the press, "I could hardly hope that John D. Rockefeller, Jr., would listen to a woman in her eighty-third year, who has given her whole life to the interest of the people he is exploiting."⁷¹

⁶⁷The New York Times, April 24, 1914, p. 10.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰The New York Times, May 11, 1914, p. 4.

⁷¹The New York Times, May 14, 1914, p. 6.

While in New York Mother Jones spent several busy days addressing various groups throughout the city on what she now termed the "war in Colorado." On May 17, she spoke to the Brooklyn Central Labor Union and the Manhattan Single Tax Club. The following day she was scheduled to address a gathering at the Pabst Coliseum.⁷² On May 21, Mother Jones was billed as the principal speaker at a dinner for suffragettes. As in previous meetings, her main topic was the United Mine Workers and their struggle in Colorado.⁷³

From New York, Mother Jones continued her travels, touring the mid-West and making speeches in Kansas City and Chicago.⁷⁴ In late May, she visited the Pacific Coast, where she spoke, reported the United Mine Workers Journal, to a crowd of over twenty thousand in Seattle. Her presence there almost created an international incident when she crossed the Canadian border to speak to striking miners in British Columbia.⁷⁵ By mid-July, however, she was back in New York City where she participated in a mass meeting held at Webster Hall to discuss the Colorado strike. Mother Jones told of the "murder" of women and children at Ludlow on April 20, "when the babies were sacrificed in order to protect Standard Oil dividends."⁷⁶

⁷²"Mother Jones Talks on Colorado Strike," United Mine Workers Journal, XXV (May 21, 1914), p. 2.

⁷³The New York Times, May 23, 1914, p. 2.

⁷⁴Jones, Autobiography, pp. 195-199.

⁷⁵George Pettigrew, "Mother Jones in Vancouver," United Mine Workers Journal, XXV (May 21, 1914), p. 2.

⁷⁶"Mass Meeting Demands Action," United Mine Workers Journal, XXV (July 23, 1914), p. 2.

While Mother Jones was touring the nation in an effort to solicit support for the striking miners, the struggle in Colorado was drawing to a close. President Wilson, disturbed by the violence of the strike, appointed a commission of two men, one representing the coal companies and the other representing the interest of labor, to work out a plan for settling the strike. On September 7, 1914, this commission announced its proposal which included practically everything the miners desired with the exception of union recognition and the increase in wages. The union, its strike fund depleted by the long struggle, immediately accepted the proposal.⁷⁷ The mining companies, on the other hand, rejected the offer and explained that they were working on a "more comprehensive plan."⁷⁸ With this turn of events the union realized that it had lost the conflict, and on December 10, 1914, voted to terminate the strike, a decision that marked the United Mine Workers' greatest defeat in over a decade.⁷⁹

In spite of the union's defeat, the horror of Ludlow was not easily forgotten, and there was a demand for a full-scale investigation. In January of 1915, the United States Commission on Industrial Relations continued in New York City the hearings on the Colorado strike that it had begun the previous year in Colorado. One of the principal witnesses in New York was John D. Rockefeller, Jr., the major stockholder and a

⁷⁷Yallen, American Labor Struggles, pp. 241-244.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 244.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 247.

director of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company. Rockefeller testified before the commission that as a director and stockholder in the company he had little control over labor policy; this was the responsibility of the company management. He confessed that he had little knowledge of the conditions under which the employees of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company lived and worked. He did not, moreover, object to trade unions. He told the commission that as a consequence of events in Colorado, he intended in the future to take a more active role in the affairs of the company.⁸⁰

Perhaps the most widely publicized and dramatic event of the commission's hearings in New York was the confrontation between Mother Jones and young Rockefeller. According to The New York Times, Mother Jones attended all three days of Rockefeller's testimony before the commission and saw the young millionaire "face a merciless cross-examination at the hands of the investigators with courtesy, good temper, and pride."⁸¹ In a story headlined "Rockefeller Aid Is Mother Jones," the Times related how, on the last day of his testimony, Rockefeller approached her and invited her to his office to discuss the Colorado situation. "Well, that's nice of you," Mother Jones is alleged to have replied, "I've always said you could never know what those hirelings out there were doing. I liked the way you testified yesterday, and I can

⁸⁰Graham Adams, Jr., Age of Industrial Violence, 1910-1915; the Activities and Findings of the United States Commission on Industrial Relations, pp. 161-163.

⁸¹The New York Times, January 29, 1915, p. 1.

see now how easy it is to misjudge you."⁸² It was agreed that the two, along with United Mine Workers' President Frank Hayes, would meet at Rockefeller's offices later in the week.⁸³

On January 27, Mother Jones, Frank Hayes, and Rockefeller talked for over an hour on the Colorado situation. Following their conference, Rockefeller told reporters that he hoped this direct personal contact with some of the leaders of the labor movement would be the "beginnings of better things."⁸⁴ He said that he and Mother Jones had discussed the conditions that existed among the miners in Colorado. Mother Jones told Rockefeller the grievances of the miners concerning the company stores and the company controlled schools and pointed out some of the other problems. "We have been misrepresenting him terribly," lamented Mother Jones, "and I as much as anyone else."⁸⁵ Following the publication of these events in the newspapers, Mother Jones received a telegram from Upton Sinclair which read: "We are sure you will not be overcome by the sweet odor of the American beauty rose."⁸⁶

One of the items Mother Jones and Rockefeller discussed was the Colorado Industrial Representation Plan, originated, at Rockefeller's

⁸²The New York Times, January 27, 1915, p. 5.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴The New York Times, January 28, 1915, p. 1.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶The New York Times, January 29, 1915, p. 1.

request, by the former Canadian minister of labor, W. L. Mackenzie King.⁸⁷ The plan provided for a company union which would insure, according to its sponsors, the right of the miner to bring his grievances before a committee composed of representatives of the company and of the employees.⁸⁸ Mother Jones' response to the plan was less than enthusiastic. She observed that while Rockefeller had good intentions in presenting the plan, she believed that it was far inferior to a strong union. She believed that Rockefeller did not understand the needs and aspirations of the coal miners. She told the press that "If he did understand, and if he is sincere, he would realize the new scheme for meeting his men in Colorado is a sham and a fraud."⁸⁹ In spite of Mother Jones' objections the Colorado Industrial Representation Plan was approved by a vote of the miners and was put into operation.⁹⁰

Despite the fact that the United Mine Workers failed in their attempt to install collective bargaining in Colorado, the fourteen-month strike had at least forced the management of the mining companies to admit that it was possible that their employees had cause for complaint. Because of the violence of the strike and the publicity given the hearings of the Commission on Industrial Relations, the nation's attention had been effectively focused on the plight of the miners, forcing the operators to

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Yallen, American Labor Struggles, p. 248.

⁸⁹The New York Times, January 29, 1915, p. 1.

⁹⁰Yallen, American Labor Struggles, p. 248.

make at least a gesture toward improving the circumstances of their employees. A good deal of the credit for this belongs to Mother Jones. She had encouraged the miners in the early days of the strike to continue the struggle. The state officials, in their clumsy and futile attempts to silence her, made her an object of national attention. Her tour of the country following the Ludlow massacre helped keep the Colorado problem, and especially the union's side of it, before the public. The confrontation between Mother Jones and John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and their subsequent discussion of the Colorado situation were well publicized in The New York Times. Mother Jones may not have won the strike in Colorado for her "boys," but she contributed a great deal toward forcing an improvement in their conditions of life and labor.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It was the purpose of this study to investigate the role of Mary Harris Jones in building the United Mine Workers of America into the most powerful labor organization in the United States and in keeping the miners' struggle for better conditions of life and labor before the press and public.

At the turn of the century, the United Mine Workers was the largest single labor organization in the United States; however, its power and influence was limited by the fact that some 150,000 Pennsylvania anthracite miners lay outside the scope of its membership. This weakness was corrected by the union's successful waging of the anthracite strikes of 1900 and 1902 which solidly established the union in the anthracite districts. Mother Jones played a major role in winning these victories for the United Mine Workers. Her speeches and marches were instrumental in winning new recruits to the union banner and closing down collieries throughout the anthracite fields in the 1900 strike. Her activities were followed with interest by the nation's press and thus helped enlist public opinion on the side of the miners. As a result of Mother Jones' efforts, union membership soared and the United Mine Workers was in a position to consummate its earlier triumph in 1900 by its victory in 1902.

Once it was well-established in the anthracite fields, the union's most serious weakness lay in its inability to extend its organization into the bituminous coal fields of West Virginia. As a consequence, in 1912,

the United Mine Workers' leadership sought to organize the West Virginia fields by initiating a strike in that area. It was in West Virginia that Mother Jones scored her greatest victory for the miners' union. Through her militant speeches and demonstrations she almost singlehandedly organized the previously nonunion Cabin Creek field. When fighting broke out in West Virginia between striking mine workers and coal company guards, Mother Jones was arrested and imprisoned by angry state officials who held her responsible for the violence. Her subsequent court-martial before a military tribunal was widely publicized throughout the nation by a shocked press and thus mustered public opinion behind the strikers. It was the trial of Mother Jones by the military commission that prompted the United States Senate to authorize an unprecedented investigation of conditions in the West Virginia strike zone. The threat of a Senate inquiry motivated embarrassed state officials to seek an end to the strike by pressuring West Virginia coal operators to comply with union demands. The result was a major victory in West Virginia for the United Mine Workers, a victory for which Mother Jones deserves much of the credit.

Mother Jones proved equally effective in the United Mine Workers' campaign to organize the coal fields of Southern Colorado in the 1913-1914 strike. By the time of the Colorado struggle, the old labor leader was so well known as an effective union agitator that state officials, who, as in West Virginia were unsympathetic to the striking miners, made every effort to prevent her from entering the strike zone. Her reputation was such that General Chase, the commander of the Colorado state militia, informed the governor that she was the primary cause of the problems

that the state faced in preventing violence during the strike. Coal company officials saw her as their greatest threat because of her influence with the miners. On three separate occasions she was arrested and either deported from the strike district or imprisoned. As in the West Virginia strike, Mother Jones used these ^{INCIDENTS} ~~incidences~~ to confound state officials and martial public opinion on the side of the miners. Again, the nation's newspapers kept their readers well informed of Mother Jones' adventures. The United Mine Workers attempted to use the state's treatment of her as a basis for demanding that the federal government intervene in Colorado to end what it considered the state's unwarranted interference with their organizers. Her tour of the country following the Ludlow massacre helped focus national attention on the Colorado problem. Her discussions with John D. Rockefeller, Jr., on the Colorado issue were followed enthusiastically by the press. Rockefeller partially credited his willingness to deal with his employees in a more fair manner to his conversations with the aged union leader. Although the United Mine Workers failed in their efforts to organize the coal fields in Southern Colorado, Mother Jones' efforts to display before the nation the plight of the miners in that area contributed to an eventual improvement in their working and living conditions.

During the decade and a half between the anthracite strike of 1900 and the Colorado strike of 1913-1914, the United Mine Workers emerged as the leader of the trade-union movement in the United States. Mother Jones played an important role in bringing this about. Without her gifts as an

organizer, combined with her ability to capitalize on a dramatic situation, it is doubtful that the miners' union would have made the gains that it did.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Adams, Graham Jr. Age of Industrial Violence, 1910-1915: The Activities and Findings of the United States Commission on Industrial Relations. New York: Columbia University Press, 1966.
- Beshoar, Baron D. Out of the Depths: The Story of John R. Lawson, a Labor Leader. Denver: Golden Bell Press, 1942.
- Brody, David. Labor in Crisis: The Steel Strike of 1919. New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1965.
- Chapin, Ralph. Wobbly: The Rough and Tumble Story of an American Radical. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948.
- Cornell, Robert J. The Anthracite Coal Strike of 1902. Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1957.
- Ginger, Ray. The Bending Cross: A Biography of Eugene V. Debs. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1949.
- Gluck, Elsie. John Mitchell, Miner: Labor's Bargain With the Gilded Age. New York: John Day Company, 1929.
- Haywood, William D. Bill Haywood's Book: The Autobiography of William D. Haywood. New York: International Publishers, 1929.
- Jones, Mary Harris. The Autobiography of Mother Jones. Chicago: C. H. Kerr and Company, 1925.
- McDonald, David J. and Edward A. Lynch. Coal and Unionism: A History of the American Coal Miners' Unions. Indianapolis: Lynald Books, 1939.
- Taft, Philip. Organized Labor in American History. New York: Harper and Row, 1965.
- Yallen, Samuel. American Labor Struggles. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1936.

Publications of the Government and Other Organizations

- United Mine Workers of America. Annual Report of International Officers, Auditors, Tellers and Delegates: Proceedings of the United Mine Workers of America. Indianapolis, 1901.

- U. S. Commission on Industrial Relations. Final Report and Testimony Submitted to Congress by the Commission on Industrial Relations. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1916. Vols. VII-XI.
- U. S. Congress, House. Report on the Colorado Strike Investigation Made Under House Resolution 387. House Doc. No. 1630. 63d Cong., 3d. Sess., 1913.
- U. S. Congress, Senate. Insurrection and Martial Law, Opinions of the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia in the Cases of Ex Rel. May v. Brown, Warden of State Penitentiary, and In Re Mary Jones, Charles H. Boswell, Charles Batley, and Paul J. Paulson. Senate Doc. No. 43. 63d Cong., 1st. Sess., 1913.
- U. S. Congressional Record. Vols. XLVII-LI.
- West, George P. Report on the Colorado Strike. Washington D. C.: U. S. Commission on Industrial Relations, 1915.

Periodicals

- "Anthracite Situation," United Mine Workers Journal, XIII (August 20, 1902), p. 1.
- "Anthracite Strike Order Issued," United Mine Workers Journal, XI (September 26, 1900), p. 1.
- Bowden, Witt. "New Developments in the Colorado Strike," The Survey, XXXI (February 14, 1914), pp. 613-614.
- Brown, John W. "Resume of the Strike in West Virginia," United Mine Workers Journal, XIII (December 26, 1912), p. 2.
- "Colorado Corners," United Mine Workers Journal, XXV (July 23, 1914), p. 1.
- "Colorado Strike," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIV (October 16, 1913), p. 1.
- "Confidence and Determination of Strikers Presages Early Adjustment of Long Standing Grievances," United Mine Workers Journal, XI (September 27, 1900), p. 8.
- "The Constitution in a Labor War," The Independent, XLVI (April 5, 1913), pp. 756-758.
- Debs, Eugene V. "Arrest of Mother Jones," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIII (February 27, 1913), p. 1.

- Editorial. Current Opinion, LV (July, 1913), p. 9.
- Edmunds, G. H. "Hot Times in West Virginia," United Mine Workers Journal, XIII (July 4, 1912), p. 8.
- "A Great Demonstration," United Mine Workers Journal, XIII (September 12, 1912), p. 1.
- "Great Power of Mother Jones Who Comes Here," United Mine Workers Journal, XIV (October 29, 1903), p. 7.
- "Hers Is the Voice Eternal," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIV (October 16, 1913), p. 2.
- "Mass Meeting Demands Action," United Mine Workers Journal, XXV (July 23, 1914), p. 2.
- "Message of Convention to Mother Jones in Prison," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIV (February 5, 1914), p. 1.
- Michelson, P. C. "Mother Jones," The Delineator, LXXXVI (May, 1915), pp. 8-9.
- Michelson, M. "Sweet Land of Liberty! Feudalism and Civil War in West Virginia, Now!" Everybody's Magazine, XXVIII (May, 1913), pp. 615-628.
- "Mine Guards Precipitate Battle," United Mine Workers Journal, (October 16, 1913), p. 3.
- "Mine Workers Hold Meeting," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIII (February 27, 1913), p. 1.
- "Mother Jones Asks Liberty in High Court," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIV (February 19, 1914), p. 1.
- "Mother Jones Deported," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIV (March 19, 1914), p. 1.
- "Mother Jones Seeks Liberty at Hands of High Court," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIV (April 9, 1914), p. 1.
- "Mother Jones Smuggles Letter Out of Colorado Military Bastile," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIV (April 9, 1914), p. 1.
- "Mother Jones Talks on Colorado Strike," United Mine Workers Journal, XXV (May 21, 1914), p. 2.
- "Mother Jones Thrills Thousands," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIII (September 26, 1912), p. 2.

Older, Mrs. Fremont (Cora). "Answering a Question," Collier's Weekly, LI (April 19, 1913), pp. 26-28.

_____. "Last Day of the Paint Creek Court Martial," The Independent, LXIV (May 15, 1913), 1085-1088.

"Our Colorado Strike: Mother Jones Routs Ammons and His Army," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIV (April 23, 1914), p. 1.

"Our Strike in Colorado," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIV (October 30, 1913), p. 1.

"Our Strike in Colorado: Mother Jones Is Deported," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIV (January 8, 1914), p. 1.

"Our Strike in West Virginia," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIII (September 12, 1912), p. 1.

"Our Strike in West Virginia," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIII (January 23, 1913), p. 2.

Paulsel, Paul P. "Our Strike in West Virginia," United Mine Workers Journal, XXIII (January 2, 1913), p. 1.

Pettigrew, George, "Mother Jones in Vancouver," United Mine Workers Journal, XXV (June 18, 1914), p. 1.

"Twenty Thousand in Line of March at Wilkes-Barre Tuesday," United Mine Workers Journal, XI (October 4, 1900), p. 1.

West, Harold. "Civil War in West Virginia," The Survey, XXXI (April 5, 1913), pp. 37-50.

"West Virginia Inquiry," The Nation, XCVI (May 29, 1913), p. 359.

Newspapers

Chicago Record, September, 1900-October, 1900.

The Houston Post, March, 1913.

New Orleans Times-Democrat, October, 1900.

The New York Times, September 1900-January, 1915.

Philadelphia Inquirer, September 19, 1900-July, 1902.

The Washington Post, May, 1913-December, 1930.

Vita was removed during scanning