

“The American working class will be violent until the workers become revolutionary in their minds and motives and organize their revolutionary spirit into force—into unions with revolutionary aims to power.”—*from the Postscript*

## **DYNAMITE:** THE STORY OF CLASS VIOLENCE IN AMERICA by Louis Adamic (with a foreword by Jon Bekken)

The history of labor in the United States is a story of almost continuous violence. In *Dynamite*, Louis Adamic recounts one century of that history in vivid, carefully researched detail. Covering both well- and lesser-known events—from the riots of immigrant workers in the second quarter of the nineteenth century to the formation of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO)—he gives precise, and often brutal, meaning to the term “class war.”

As its title suggests, *Dynamite* refuses to sugarcoat the explosive and bloody legacy of the US labor movement. While quite clear that the causes of class violence lay with both the nature of capitalism and the specific policies of U.S. industrialists, Adamic offers no apologies for the violent tactics workers employed in response. When peaceful strikes failed to yield results, working men and women fought back by any means necessary. The violent methods they used were often the only way that social injustices—from “ordinary” exploitation to massacres and judicial murder—could become visible, let alone be addressed.

This AK Press edition of Adamic’s revised 1934 version of *Dynamite*, includes a new foreword by professor and labor organizer Jon Bekken, who offers a critical overview of the work that underlines its contemporary relevance.

“Louis Adamic is the forgotten Boswell of early Los Angeles, perhaps the first writer to tune himself into the then-youthful city and report back.... He’s a writer who demands our attention.”—*The Los Angeles Times*

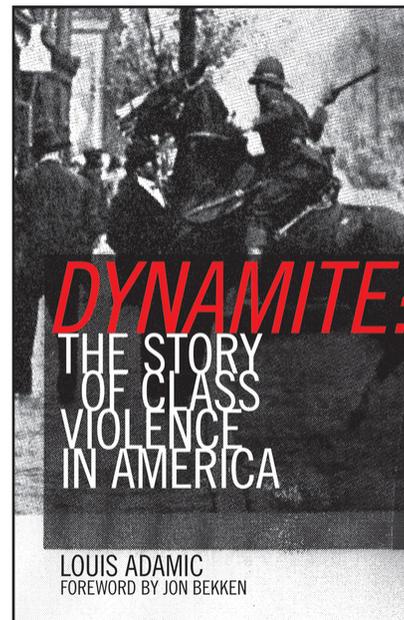
“A young immigrant with a vivid interest in labor—and the calluses to prove his knowledge was more than academic—Louis Adamic provided a unique, eyes-open-wide view of American labor history and indeed of American society. *Dynamite* was the first history of American labor ever written for a popular audience. While delineating the book’s limitations, Jon Bekken’s foreword also makes clear for today’s readers its continuing significance.”—Jeremy Brecher, historian and author of *Strike!*

“Adamic’s *Dynamite* is a classic, written with the verve and perspective of an author who was a first-hand observer and participant in many of the struggles he chronicles. And it is a powerful reminder that class struggle in America has always been pursued with ferocity and intensity. With all the book’s strengths and weaknesses, outlined in a perceptive foreword by Jon Bekken, it remains a foundational text for those who wish to understand the world...and to change it.”—Mark Leier, director of the Centre for Labour Studies at Simon Fraser University

“*Dynamite* is an absolutely necessary book. I learned more from this invaluable book than almost any other history.”—Derrick Jensen, environmental activist and author of *Endgame* and *The Culture of Make Believe*

**Louis Adamic** emigrated from Slovenia when he was fifteen years old and quickly joined the American labor force. Interspersing stints of manual labor with writing for Slovenian and English-language newspapers, he went on to receive a Guggenheim fellowship and to author eleven books. He is now recognized as a great figure in early twentieth-century American literature. He was found shot to death in a burning farmhouse in 1954.

**Jon Bekken** is co-author of *The Industrial Workers of the World: Its First 100 Years* (IWW, 2006), and co-editor of *Radical Economics and Labor: Essays Inspired by the IWW Centennial* (Routledge, 2009). He is associate professor of communications at Albright College in Reading, Pennsylvania, a former General Secretary-Treasurer of the Industrial Workers of the World, and a member of the *Anarcho-Syndicalist Review* editorial collective.



LOUIS ADAMIC  
FOREWORD BY JON BEKKEN

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