

## Duties of the Hour (July 1906)

These are days that test the fighting fiber of men; the weak and spineless go down, while those who have the true stuff in them grow strong and resolute and rise to commanding positions on the industrial battlefield.

What greater than to face the world and fight for the right without fear! What nobler than to scorn discouragement, defy adversity, and remain unconquerable, though alone, to the end!

Clear-headed, calm-pulsed, and brave-hearted need to be the men and women who make up the Industrial Workers of the World. This proletarian organization has carved out for itself a stupendous work such as cowards and weaklings would not dare to undertake. Never was an organization more timely, or better adapted to the pressing needs of the times.

The American Federation of Labor and its allied organizations have for years demonstrated little else except their utter incapacity to serve the working class. The few nominal concessions which may be claimed by some of the unions are completely swamped by the flood of failures which has drenched the industrial field.

The recent abject surrender of the organized anthracite mine workers is a case in point. The arrogant, brutal mine owners cracked their lash over the heads of their organized slaves and dared them to make a move. The humble petition they had ventured to present was rejected with contempt. Not a single concession, no matter how trivial, was made. Not one! It was a cold and brutal victory for the capitalist brigands, and a humiliating defeat and surrender for the organized vassals of the mines.

And yet some of the officials of the routed wage-slaves had the hardihood to claim a victory. *The union had been recognized.* The kicks it had received, the scars it bears, the mutilation inflicted upon it prove it.

Yes, *the union was recognized*, and upon that plea the officials may, for a while longer, hold their jobs — but it will not be recognized in the anthracite fields in a few months from now, for there will not be enough left of it to recognize.

A few letters received from various parts of the anthracite region since the “victory” satisfy me that the mine workers have all they want of civic federation unionism, and that at an early day they will be ready to adopt

the revolutionary program and transfer their allegiance to the Industrial Workers of the World.

Let us suppose for a moment that when the anthracite mine workers met the cold-blooded and defiant mine owners, they were members of the Industrial Workers; that the railroad employees and other workers in Pennsylvania were also organized in the same revolutionary union, ready to back the miners to a finish, the railroad employees serving notice that not an ounce of scab-mined coal should be hauled and inch, is it probable that they, facing such a battery of class-conscious unionism the Baer bandits would have issued their swaggering demand for unconditional surrender? Is it not more likely that they would have slid down from their high horse with alacrity and made at least some concessions to avoid collision with the proletarian battleship?

The capitalists, whatever else may be said about them, are no fools. In dealing with organized labor they know, as a rule, what they are up against, and have to meet it, and when they stand face to face with a labor union they carefully sound it and satisfy themselves as to what it is, what it amounts to, and how to deal with it, and then they proceed accordingly, and if they do not attack and smash the union it is for one of two reasons: either they are afraid of it, or they see a chance to make an ally of it and convert it to their own base use.

The labor union that the capitalists approve is branded with treason in living letters. The capitalists can no more endorse a bona fide labor union than the powder trust can endorse Hades as a powder house.

Not long ago a prominent mine owner at Terre Haute, in conversation with a businessman of the same place, said: *"The truth is we can't afford to break with the union, for it's the only thing that stands between us and socialism."*

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And now, what are some of the pressing duties of the hour? Manifestly, to take advantage of the increasing opportunities to open the eyes of the workers to the true causes of their grievances, their defeats, and their humiliation, and this can best be done by having our papers penetrate their ranks and our literature placed in the hands of the rank and file. To this end, each member should do his utmost to secure subscribers for The Industrial Worker. A little effort on the part of all would soon double the

subscription list and quadruple the awakening power of this excellent proletarian publication.

Next, each local union, and, in fact, each member should carry a supply of party pamphlets, leaflets, and circulars and make systematic distribution of them. In places where there is no union one should be organized without unnecessary delay, care being taken to admit those only who are qualified by character and conduct to serve the organization.

There should be no time for bickering, for chronic fault-finding, nor for mere personalities. the organization is too great and its mission too important to be jeopardized by personal imbroglio or internecine strife. Let us reserve all our vigor, all our resources, and all our equipment for the enemy, for unless I mistake the signs, we shall require our full capacity to weather the storm and safely reach our destined port.

Another duty, and of the first importance, is unflinching loyalty to our western comrades. Not for one moment dare we forget or neglect Moyer, Haywood, St. John, and Pettibone. They are the bravest boys we have, and whatever fate may have in store for the, we shall loyally share it.

The recent postponement [of the Moyer-Haywood trial] is doubly significant. The spontaneous uprising of the working class has paralyzed the capitalist arm of murder. But the intended victims are not yet safe, nor will they be until they are free. Let the agitation, therefore, continue, and let the protests rise and burn from coast to coast. Let it be remembered, too, that the long postponement until December is due mainly to political reasons, that this is a congressional year, and that every worker in the land will have a chance this fall to carry his protest to the ballot box, and if he would be true to his imprisoned comrades and drive the nail in the coffin of capitalism, let him cast a straight vote for *socialism and freedom*.