



Wages? Ha Ha!

In the course of human events when becomes necessary for the people to strike for living wages, liberty and happiness, it behooves any man or set of men to see to it that they are on them.

When, in the nature of things, an unhappy community, law abiding, law upholding and law supporting, find themselves unable to pay their taxes, meet their bills or otherwise maintain their ideals, it becomes an irresponsible man or a set of such men to leave their regular haunts, to obtain "easy money," as strikebreakers.

Camouflage starvation how you will, call it slavery by a sweeter name, men still will fight for their homes and little ones.

Only recently the masters' press has been hinting very strongly that less than fifty such strikebreakers at Herrin, Ill. relinquished all claims they held against society in a battle with miners. Twenty-five or more of these "unknown" scabs came to a "known" end at the hands of parties or persons "unknown," and were so recorded in the coroner's report.

The army of unemployed has been reduced by twenty-five or more members and the masters' press very touchingly recounts the sad demise of each scab over and over again—as if to bring the breath of life back into the cold bodies which were so very useful in bolstering up an inefficient system of production—and true it is when workingmen are compelled to fight for jobs, commit murder for jobs, and scab for jobs, that something is radically wrong with that system.

It is unreasonable to suppose the government has been blind to the fact that a few million workingmen have been obliged to either scab, beg or steal in order to live. But if such be the case, it is not too late now, to favor the people with a measure of relief. Our country needs no army of the unemployed to cut wages for those employed and any conscious effort (on the part of the employers) to create one should be discouraged—not encouraged.

People do not resort to firearms because of any love for the smell of powder; people do not shoot—scabs even—just to see how high they will jump—no!

People resort to arms only in the direst extremity, when no other way seems fruitful of results. When one man fires a gun the man may be mad, drunk or crazy; but when 600 workingmen carry arms it is reasonable to think they are in earnest and it would be well for the authorities to ponder on these things and attempt to find relief for them.

I have prophesied that the mine trouble would continue about 110 days, the high prices on coal will be maintained, and the strike will end on or about the 16th day of July, 1922. But now it begins to look as if the miners may desire to prolong the agony until such a time as they will be permitted to receive certain substantial increases in pay for the trouble they have been put to.

The surplus of coal is now down to normal and while the prices of other commodities have dropped considerable in some cases, the price of coal has continued "shimmying" ever to a higher level—to a level that surely warrants all the demands made on the operators by the miners. We have trusted the capitalist system to take care of industrial questions with the result that they have muddled through them, profitably to themselves. How long the American people will continue to do so is a matter for speculation. This much we of the I. W. W. know: It is idle to discuss living wages with the operators. It is almost criminal insanity to attempt to convince the exploiters with argument that a higher standard of living is necessary for an efficient slave. A "run-down" slave is like a "run-down" alarm clock; neither has the ambition to strike. The question is not "a living wage"; the question is not a guaranteed existence. The question is less complicated than this. It is simply the formation of a one big union for the purpose of obtaining the full product of labor's toil.

Enough of violence! Enough of murder! Let us organize the working class.

—T-Bone Slim.