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REBELLION

Made Up of
Dreams and Dynamite

VOL. I.

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Behold West Virginia!



SOUTHMEN!--- OFF YOUR KNEES!

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WEST VIRGINIA "MINE WAR"

HEROIC STRUGGLE OF HER REBEL MINERS
AGAINST THE MACHINES OF TRUST, STATE
AND THEIR OWN (?) UNION LAID BARE

(By W. H. Thompson.)

West Virginia, once known as the "Switzerland of America," could now be as appropriately designated as the "Belgium of America," for it is said that Belgium, prior to the present war, was the one country in Europe where capitalism had blossomed into perfection, and where the exploitation of the proletariat had reached its maximum degree.

At the risk of becoming tiresome I will attempt a brief review of the political history of the "Little Mountain State," nearly all of whose territory is traversed by those great mountains known as the Appalachians.

Until June 20, 1863, that territory now comprising the State of West Virginia was a part of Virginia, and the rape of the war-torn mother State of her richest jewel is in itself a story rich in such tyrannical political tactics as have since become infamous in the new State.

When the Civil War began the loyal sons of Virginia entered the Confederate army, all of those in the western part of the State going east, to and around Richmond, where, as it is generally known, the conflict waged fiercest for the first few years.

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This left the Western part of the State in the hands of Federal sympathizers and Northern bummers, and the Federal army of invasion coming from the West had practically no opposition in occupying the territory. With this part of the State absolutely in the hands of Federal soldiers and their sympathizers, the secession from Virginia and the formation of a new State was comparatively easy. The matter was placed before the people in a special election, held under the auspices of the Federal army, hundreds of the soldiers voting, and the proposition for forming a new State carried by a vote of 18,000 to 700. West Virginia was admitted to Statehood by the United States Congress, June 20, 1863.

At the close of the Civil War the citizens of Western Virginia returned to their homes only to find themselves in the hands and under the domination of as complete and smoothly working a Carpet-Bag government as could be found south of the Mason and Dixon line. But these men were not the kind to dumbly submit, nor was their nerve to be doubted, as had been amply proven on many a bloody field. They at once began a struggle to regain control of the machinery of their government, and as a preliminary step they organized themselves into that mysterious working and powerful Ku Kluk Klan. At the end of nine years, or in '72, the citizens were strong enough to unhorse the Carpet-Baggers and again reclaim their government. This victory was celebrated by the calling of a constitutional convention which gave to the people of West Virginia

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one of the best constitutions to be found among the various States of the Union, when it comes to a statement and guarantee of the rights of the individual and society.

Less than 50 years ago our fathers gave us a government founded on principles built around the motto: "Mountaineers are always freemen," and then settled back into contemplation of oncoming old age, secure in the belief that their sons would prove worthy of their sires, and would rally again to the whispered, penetrating call of the "Klan" rather than again bend their neck beneath the yoke of the despoiler. But, oh, that they might wander today over the beautiful "free mountains" of their beloved State and witness the degradation, misery and slavery of the once "free mountaineers!"

But fifty years of Capitalistic domination has done what Carpet-Bag and military domination and tyranny failed to do, and today there exists in West Virginia possibly the most scientific system of exploitation of the workers to be found in the whole of North America.

Coal is Kaiser—To write of West Virginia is to write of coal, coal mines, and coal miners. Although rich in timber, gas and oil, by far the greatest industry of the State, and the one on which practically the entire population depend, either directly or indirectly, for a livelihood, is COAL, and he who would deal with conditions in the State must start with this product, and the men who produce it, which brings me to the beginning of my story.

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The workers in practically all other lines of industry in the State have been reduced to docility and lethargy bordering on the hopeless, but the coal miners still show flashes of the fighting spirit that moved their forebears of the "Klan" to action, and it is of their recent struggles that I wish to write.

It is a hard proposition to make plain to the workers of the big industrial centers, cities and towns, the peculiar situation of the coal miners.

The coal mines of West Virginia are located in mountain fastnesses, and the land, roads, houses, stores, in every direction, and for miles in extent, are the private property of the coal corporations. The lives of the miners and their families are as completely under the sway of the coal companies as were the serfs under the feudal land barons. The miner owns **absolutely nothing** except the meager furnishings in the shack the company rents him as a "home." He rarely receives real money for his labor, but takes in lieu thereof provender from the company store, and in case he desires to leave his employer he must walk for perhaps many miles to secure another job as a miner, with a similar company, and then have his new employer send the company "wagon" to his last place of residence and haul his family and household belongings to the scene of his new job and their new "home." Always under the domination of some coal company—there is no escape.

Absolute dependence must breed both slavery and tyranny, and no place in the world is this better

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proven than in the West Virginia hills. With a little band of miners immersed in the wilderness, miles from civilization, all modes of communication with the outside world owned and in the hands of the coal company, and the miners depending absolutely upon the company for every necessity of life, is it any wonder that the coal barons placed the foot of tyranny upon the inviting necks of the dependents and bore down with all the savagery that characterizes present-day Capitalism?

A protest on the part of the dependent miners is well nigh hopeless, yet the blind oppression from above does at times arouse the slaves and sporadic local rebellions are of constant occurrence, being put down at times by the Masters only by the most brutal, cruel and inhuman methods.

Yet that these protests do occur is the one bright ray of hope for the working class of the State.

In case of a revolt or strike of the coal miners at any mine, or in any mining section of the State, immediate starvation stares the strikers in the face. Foodstuffs are not produced in these mining sections; the only source of supply is the company store; even the railroads running into the coal camps are the property of the coal barons, who refuse to haul food to strikers, even when it is donated by sympathizers outside the strike zone.

Outworn Tactics of U. M. W. A.—Under these conditions the first thoughts of the incipient rebel organization is how it may feed its members, and these very conditions gave birth to the once great but now

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rapidly waning organization known as the United Mine Workers of America.

The U. M. W. of A., organized back in the days of real competition between groups of independent capitalists, for a time served the purpose for which it was organized—that purpose being the feeding of any strikers of the craft by those of the organization who were employed. This object was accomplished in this way: The miners in District No. X, pressed to the breaking point, rebelled and went on strike; neighboring Districts Nos. Z and Y, and the entire organization, if necessary, assessed its members a proportionate amount, purchased enormous quantities of foodstuffs and sent them into the struck territory—using horses and wagons when the use of the railroads were denied them. In this way, and working upon the natural jealousies existing among the small groups and individual coal mine owners, the organization was often able in a certain degree to afford temporary surcease from oppression, and in many instances real increases in the wage rate paid.

But Capital and Capitalists engaged in coal mining, as well as all other industries, have steadily tended toward a closer co-operation, until today the Mine Workers Organization, instead of facing the warring individual mine owners of two decades ago, is up against something altogether and totally different—a league of coal mining interests as wide as the nation, as cohesive as cement, as ruthless as a Master always is, and as black as Hell.

And the Miners' Organization seems totally una-

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ble to grasp the fact that conditions have changed, and their attempts to use the tactics that were at least partially successful against the competing coal producers of twenty years ago, against the solidified coal trust of the present, are pitiable.

The United Mine Workers have lost every battle waged against the Coal Octopus in recent years by the simple expedient of fighting it a section at the time. Glance at the list of the more important engagements lost, and see if I lie: The Anthracite struggle in Pennsylvania; the bitter fight in Alabama; the British Columbia conflict; the Colorado catastrophe; the West Virginia war; the Arkansas revolt, and the present Ohio famine—surely enough to prove to anyone who would give the question even a moment's thought that there is something vitally wrong with the methods used by the vanquished.

Workings of "The Machine."—One of the things that is wrong, and vitally wrong, is the MACHINE of the organization itself. A powerful organization, with an extensive treasury and wide resources, attracted about that treasury an army of well paid officials and employees, who have stuck like barnacles to a boat bottom, and the very nature of their environment has made them, not only a retardment to the progress of the craft, but an actual influence of retrogression. Called originally from the rank and file, these men were granted salaries far greater than that which they could make as producers of coal; they were pleasantly situated in the cities of

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the country, and actually out of touch with their former fellow workers. It was no more than natural—a rule of the law of economic determinism—that these gentlemen held on to these positions with all the tenacity with which they were endowed. It is also as natural that as time passed they came to look upon the organization, not as a fighting instrument of the rank and file, but rather as a means of livelihood for themselves.

In the satisfied mind progression ceases, and the possessor shrieks in alarm at any proposed change that might, even remotely, effect his own economic security. The members of the official machine of the U. M. W. of A., occupied only with the purpose of keeping themselves in direct connection with the honey vats, or "pie counter," as the West Virginia "red necks" prefer to term the treasury, answers the question as to why this organization has not evolved new and winning tactics for use in the class struggle of today. There is always the fear that anything new may cause a readjustment in which something inimical to the interests of the job holders may occur. This was illustrated only recently—right after the massacre of Ludlow—when the rank and file of miners the country over, demanded of its official machine that a nation-wide strike of their industry be called in order to impress upon the public in a forcible manner the horrors that had been precipitated upon their fellows at Ludlow.

The National Executive Machine of the Organization met in response to these appeals, debated the

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question for several days, then turned it down with the following explanation to their employers—the rank and file—"IN OUR OPINION IT IS NOT YET TIME FOR SUCH AN ACTION."

And when this Machine makes a decision it backs it up with power little dreamed of by those outside the rank and file who have tried by sheer weight of numbers to overrule its findings; and it is not particular where this power is derived from—even going to the worst enemies of the rank and file, and affiliating with them in order to crush any incipient rebellion among the workers, who are beginning to question its decisions and purposes. This has been well illustrated in the West Virginia struggle.

The most stubborn rebellion of coal miners in West Virginia, and one which has done more to educate the working class of the State than anything that ever happened within her borders, was that widely known as the Paint Creek and Cabin Creek strike of 1912-13, but in reality covering not only the two creeks mentioned, but the whole of one of the U. M. W. of A's many districts—No. 17.

When a strike of coal miners occurs there immediately appears in the organization two factions—one composed of the rank and file, the real producers of coal, and the recipients of the oppressive tactics of the Masters, who want VICTORY; the other faction consists of the officials and paid hangers-on, who want, at any cost and on any conditions, a SETTLEMENT. A strike always places the economic interests of these gentlemen in danger, and their one

longing desire is that the slaves get back on the job and resume the steady flow of "checked-off" dues and assessments into the treasury.

This condition was found in the strike of District No. 17, in 1912. The miners made certain demands, among which was, first, the abolition of the hated private guard system; second, a small increase in wages, and third, the right to buy their necessities at other than the company-owned commissaries, or "robbersaries." The miners had suffered the indignities arising from conditions from which emanated these demands, until they were willing to make any sacrifice, even to life itself, to change them.

Not so, however, with their officials, who did not have to live under the continual menace of the guards' machine guns, and purchase their necessities at the outrageous prices from the company commissaries. They didn't want to sacrifice anything—what they wanted and what they worked for continually was a SETTLEMENT and a resumption of dues paying, and the struggle finally resolved itself into a conflict between the rebel miners on the one side, and the official machine of their organization, the coal barons and the State government on the other—and the miners gave a good account of themselves even against these odds.

Brave Old Mother Jones had organized this district some years before, and she did what no other organizer had ever done before—distributed among these miners thousands of revolutionary pamphlets, and took hundreds of subscriptions for radical publica-

tions. Thus when the "settlement artists" got busy on the 1912 strike they were confronted by an awakening rank and file who knew exactly what they wanted, and who had begun to weigh their officials in the always true scale of economic determinism. The coal interests and the miners' officials "conferenced" and offered the miners a "sacred contract"—an exact replica of the one they just revolted against. The miners refused it. Then the coal trust augmented its private army of gunmen with 200 new recruits and several new machine guns and instructed it to drive the men back into the mines or massacre them. The army attempted to carry out its instructions and failed—its failure being marked by about 120 gunmen's graves on the bleak mountain sides of Paint and Cabin creeks.

When the private army of the coal interests failed, they called in their public army—the State militia, officials, courts, and the whole damn smear that is organized for protecting the loot. The rebel coal miners had not reached that point in their education where they would realize that the State and all its powers was as subservient to Capitalism as its own private army of thugs; they were great believers in "constitutional rights," and they actually hailed the coming of the militia and the State as something they could use for their own protection—were they not "sovereign citizens," the "brain and brawn" of the "commonwealth," even as the political speakers had said?

The Militia Came—Two thousand heavily armed

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men, equipped with machine guns. The miners placed their old Springfields and squirrel rifles over the mantles and sat down in fancied security—only to be surrounded, made prisoners of war and thrown into “bullpens” on a charge of being in insurrection against THE STATE!

And now the State, absolutely owned and directed by Capitalism, proceeded to give the “sovereign citizens” a working example of how little the present robber system is bound by ancient laws, customs, constitutions, precedents, and other legal and legislative junk.

It threw 200 of the leading strikers into military bullpens, the Governor appointed a court composed of military officers before which these 200 “sovereign citizens” were arraigned, tried (?) and sentenced to long terms in the penitentiary.

Ah, said the miners, we'll show this military regime a thing or two; “Our” CONSTITUTION says distinctly that civilians shall not be tried by a military court, and it likewise declares that the military is subordinate to the civil powers. So we'll just apply to “OUR” courts for redress. They applied to the circuit judge of their county, who took one look at Article 3, Section 10, of the Constitution, issued a writ of prohibition forbidding further procedure of the military court, placed it in the hands of the sheriff, who proceeded into the mountain fastnesses, only to be met at the border of the martial law zone by a military officer and detail, placed under arrest

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and coolly informed that civil process didn't run in the martial law zone!

Oh, well, said the miners, that's only a small court, and hasn't much power anyway—we'll take the matter into the Supreme Court and show these yellowlegs where to get off at. They applied to the Supreme Court of the State for the release of a batch of the sentenced prisoners, including 80-year-old Mother Jones, on a writ of habeas corpus. The four ex-corporation lawyers and capitalistic buzzards that roost on the Supreme Bench, squinted wisely at Section 4 of Article 3 of the sacred Constitution and decided that it didn't amount to a damn anyway, so for the first time in the history of the State the writ of habeas corpus failed to issue.

Miners Wake Up—By this time the miners began to wake up. They were the only combatants that had been placed under military arrest; the hated guards, their recent enemies, were enjoying absolute freedom from military molestation; not a coal operator, nor any of their hangers-on had been arrested. The miners had been deprived of their arms but the coal companies' machine guns still frowned upon their miserable homes. It suddenly dawned upon them that they had no State, and that every power that could be used against them—the militia, the courts, the press, the pulpit—was in the hands of their enemy—the Coal Trust.

The official machine of the miners' organization had remained discreetly in the background during

the strenuous part of this campaign, but with the unruly rank and file thrown and hog-tied by the capitalistic tools, the officials got on the ground, to save their dues in the final "settlement," and they openly affiliated themselves with the coal barons and the State government in forcing the original obnoxious agreement upon the beaten and prostrated miners. For their part in forcing the miners back into the pits they were to receive the privilege of "checking-off" dues and assessments from each miner's pay, the companies agreeing to collect these and pay them over. And it might be said right here that the official machine was, in the end, the one thing that did drive the miners back. The companies failed with their private army. Governor Hatfield, with 200 of the strike leaders in the bullpens and the penitentiary, issued a bombastic proclamation, giving the miners 36 hours in which to return to work under the proposed agreement, or be deported with their families from the State—and those sons of Klu Kluk sires laughed at his threats. Then the third-figure in the triangle got busy.

The coal miners the country over had freely assessed themselves to feed the West Virginia strikers, and they had insisted that this assistance reach those for whom it was intended; but, of course, the disposition of this aid was in the hands of the official machine.

When the Hatfield threat had failed to frighten the miners back to work, the officials—with their promise of the "check-off" in case of success—took the

matter in hand. They went into the strike field, guarded in some instances by the yellowlegs, so afraid were they of the reception their proposition would receive, and informed the strikers that unless they went back to work on the terms offered by the coal companies they, the officials, would cut off their supply of provisions and they would be left to starve.

The rebel "red necks" who had charged and captured belching machine guns with their bare hands, who had laughed in the face of a ferocious military governor, took one look at their gaunt wives and little ones, one venomous gaze at their traitorous officials and turned their faces toward the pit entrances.

The miners carried back with them to the mines one burning determination, that was to at least regain control of their own district organization, throw out the traitorous local officials who had acted in concert with the National Machine, and if possible stir up a revolt of the rank and file of the craft the country over, that would result in a revolution within the entire organization, and place it again in the hands of the dues payers and make of it a real modern weapon in the class struggle.

Scalawag Haggerty and Fake "Secret" Locals — They have unrelentingly pursued this determination, but the official machine is powerfully intrenched. Its interests in West Virginia are ably looked after by Thomas Haggerty, one of the ablest parasites of the organization, and one who is thoroughly conversant with every dirty method known to organization machines. When the recent delegate convention of Dis-

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trict No. 17 met for the election of new officers and the rebels came in heavily loaded and prepared to make a clean-up of their District machine, they were confronted by Haggerty with credentials from "secret" locals which he claimed to have organized in a nearby scab field, and which everybody knows to be fake locals; but the 2000 alleged members were voted solidly for the district machine candidates—they were re-elected and, although the rebels knew full well that they were again double crossed, they have no appeal except to the National Machine Committee, which sent Haggerty into the State to pull this and similar stunts.

The neighboring West Virginia District, No. 29, only recently held their convention for the election of officers, and came out of the conflict with their machine but little better off. The rebels defeated all the machine officials, but the defeated ones immediately appealed the election, on some technical grounds, to the National Machine, and it is confidently expected that they will be seated in place of the rebel officials whom the convention elected.

Revolutionized Union Only Hope—Under such conditions the one big fight of the Coal Miners at this time the country over, is against the ultra-conservative retrogressive policies of their official machine. Until the machine is overthrown and the tactics of the organization revolutionized, it is useless for the rank and file to expect any results from the sacrifices such as have recently been made, except such as were received at Paint Creek and Ludlow.

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Those Who Oppose the Jitney.

First of all, owners of Railway watered stock.

Short-sighted holders of bonds in this watered-stock corporation.

Owners of private automobiles who resent the intrusion on the public highways of the "common herd."

Milady of St. Charles avenue is furious that her Limousine must be inconvenienced by cars carrying "shop girls" and "factory hands."

How awfully shocking, the Jitney endangers the morals of the poor girl!

Hence the Jitney should be well lighted within while the Limousine may still be dark.

And, finally, have the president and executive board of the street railway men's union listened to the whisper from "Headquarters?"

How about the 19 crews said to have been "put out of commission" by the use of the new big cars on the St. Charles-Tulane Belt? Is this of no interest to the "leaders?"

Let charity cover the reason for their reason; perhaps some day the men will wake up to the need of leaders who will represent the union instead of the bosses.

J. WAR.

—oo—

Water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink. However, common stock can be easily turned into champagne, hot birds and affinities, and that's some consolation.

DOUBLE-BARRELED ROBBERY

Suppose the City Waterworks came to you and said, "We will furnish you with so much water at so much per paid in advance." And you agreed. And then the city collected the money and left it in a safe in your house, the key of the safe being in possession of its agent. And a mean little robber came in and swiped the city's money. And then the city came to you and said, "If you don't pay me my money the robber stole from me I will cut off your water supply." What would you think of the city's proposition? Wouldn't you call it double-barreled robbery?

Well, that's just what the Gas Gang has done with in the past 60 days. It has gone to people who had "pay in advance" meters in their houses and demanded of them, the householders, that they make good the money taken from meters by thieves, threatening to take the meters out unless they made good. It is even said that some of the householders were foolish enough to stand for this double-barreled hold-up and coughed-up the quarters to make good the Gas Gang's lost cash, tho they had already paid it—In Advance.

Gall? No, it's as easy to bluff money out of the average New Orleansite as it is to take candy from a blind baby, easier, in fact.

This, it is said, explains how some people are able to pay dividends on water with wind.

But the worm hath turned, the worm hath turned!

WHO SMOTHERED TERREBONNE GAS FIELD?

In Terrebonne parish, less than 50 miles from the city, gas wells have been struck that showed twice the pressure of those in the Caddo fields. Mr. Wilson J. Gaidry, living two miles below Houma, has recently and at a depth of only about 150 feet, brought in a gas well with a pressure of 35 pounds, and is now using it in his house, dairies and barns. All over the parish there is every indication of gas in large quantities underlying the soil.

Considering the pressing need of cheap fuel to develop the industries of New Orleans, why have the men who have shown that a great gas field is lying at our doors been unable to get money enough to open the field and bring the gas here? Seeing such things, is it any wonder that people everywhere look on our city as a "dead one?" Who smothered the Terrebonne gas field and why?

—oo—

The Hero pumping plant would be a splendid addition to the Railway Company. Its pump capacity would be severely taxed in reducing the "water" level in that corporation.

—oo—

Rebellion means no harm—it only means to squeeze the water out of "common," the wind out of Gas.