

EDITORIAL

THE AWARD.

By DANIEL DE LEON

AFTER months of trial, during which 558 witnesses were heard and a full week was given to closing arguments, and after more than a month was consumed by the Commission in digesting all this evidence and argument, the award on the anthracite strike is rendered. The award is a victory,—essentially, aye, in many respects explicitly so—for the mine-owners. It is correspondingly a defeat for the mine-workers. Considering, moreover, that, morally, the cause of the whole working class was in the balance, the award amounts to a deliberate and well aimed blow at American Labor.

What are the determining clauses of the award?

Is it the granting of a 10 per cent. rise in wages? Such a 10 per cent. “victory” was scored by these identical miners three years ago, and greeted by Mitchell as a triumph,—greeted as such by the identical Mitchell who, during this strike, proved that the “victory” of three years ago was a snare and a delusion. Identical conditions now establish the identity of the value of the present 10 per cent. raise.

Is it the reduction of hours of labor for some of the men? Closely scanned this concession will be found to have so many strings to it that it is essentially a farce.

What, then, are the determining features of the award? They are these:

First: The express declaration that “the conditions of the life of the mine-workers outside the mines” have been painted unduly black;

Second: The express declaration that “the social conditions in the mining communities are good”; (!!)

Third: The implied declaration that child labor is due to the greed and cruelty, not of the mine-owners, but of the mine-workers, seeing that their wages “are not so low as necessarily to force them to put their small children to work”; (!!!)

Fourth: The express declaration that “the average daily rate of earnings in the anthracite regions does not compare unfavorably with that of other industries.”

To sum up what the Commission announces amounts to this:

“Whereas, The mine-workers’ earnings are substantially those of the workmen in other industries; and

Whereas, The social conditions of the mine-workers are good; and

Whereas, Whatever outrageous conditions the children of these mine-workers suffer under are due to the greed of the parents; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the social conditions of the American working class are good; and be it further

Resolved, That to strike for better conditions and calling that a war between capital and labor is treason to the United States, because “there is only one war-making power recognized by our institutions, and that is the Government of the United States.”

Is such an award preposterous?

Yes,—if the condition of the working class is considered; if it is considered that it produces phenomenal wealth and receives for its reward phenomenal distress: sudden death by “accidents,” shortened life through the gradual sapping of its health, poverty and dependence.

No,—if it is considered that John Mitchell, the “general,” who led the strike, led the revolutionary spark of the strike into the ground by injecting into the veins of the workers the opiate of the “brotherhood of capitalists and workmen,” asphyxiated the aspirations of the American working class by inducing one half of his organization, the bituminous miners, to scab it on their anthracite fellow wage-slaves, and crowned his work of treason by placing the Cause of Labor tied hand and foot before a tribunal fitly ornamented by such a lieutenant of the capitalist class in Labor’s ranks as E.E. Clark of the Brotherhood of Railroad Conductors.

Such are the “victories” of pure and simple Trades Unionism. And such are the “victories” that the Socialist Labor Party, jointly with the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, has raised its banner to put an end to.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

Uploaded November 2006