The United Mine Workers of America have now been on strike four months. According to information I have at hand, there are more than six hundred thousand miners engaged in this gigantic struggle, which was brought about because of the refusal of the coal operators to meet with the official representatives of the miners, as provided by contract. They not only refused to meet with the miners’ representatives, as they had previously agreed to do, but in every statement given to the Press by the coal operators, they have said there must be a substantial reduction in the miners’ wages.

These Coal Operators, who pose as one hundred per cent Americans, should be ashamed to look an honest man in the face, when it is taken into consideration that they have not only exploited and robbed the general public for many years by the outrageous prices they have charged for their coal, but in addition to that, they have kept the miners and their wives and children in hunger and starvation for all these many years.

The Operators, in their appeal for public sympathy, are making the plea that they are making the fight to reduce the miners’ wages because of the interest they have in the welfare of the people, while the real facts are, they want to reduce the miners’ wages so they may put the additional profits in their own pockets.

The Coal Operators are working hand in hand with the Railroad Corporations. They sell their coal to the rich and greedy Railroad Corporations at about the price it costs them to produce it at the mine, and then charge the general public enough for the coal they sell them, to make a large profit for the coal they sell to the Railroads at cost of production. Yet, in the face of these facts, they are appealing to the Press and to the general public for sympathy in their fight to reduce the miners to starvation wages.

The miners who produce the coal to keep the people of the nation warm, are today living in poverty and destitution, while the Coal Operators are living in luxury on the profits they have made from the miner’s labor. The miners of America, however, have decided to assert themselves. They will no longer agree to bow in humble submission to the dictates of the coal corporations. In the tremendous struggle in which the miners are now engaged, they are standing up like real men. They are making the most brilliant and magnificent battle that has ever been fought by the workers in the history of the world. Their splendid fighting qualities and their spirit of determination in their heroic battle for industrial freedom and justice, commands the respect and admiration of the people of the entire nation.

Arbitration has been proposed in trying to settle the miners’ strike. Arbitration has always been a curse to organized labor. The miners are fully competent to make their own contracts, and they should fight to the last ditch to maintain that principle, and never agree...
to permit any commission or board of arbitration to tell the coal miners of the country what their wages and conditions of employment shall be.

The outcome of the struggle in which the miners are now engaged, is being watched with a great deal of interest by the people of the entire nation. This is a real fight, and the coal miners have demonstrated that they are real fighters. If they lose, they know it means to go back to the days of old when they were at the complete mercy of the coal operators, when they were treated as if they were that many slaves. On the other hand, if they win it means a brighter and a better day, not only for themselves, but for the generations that are yet to come.

Every miner in this country should feel proud to take a part in this brilliant battle of the miners' union, fighting for justice, with all the powerful corporations of the nation arrayed against them.

In addition to this, the Federal Government has joined hands with the coal corporations and have said that all the power of the Government will be used to assist the operators in the production of coal, and to crush the hopes and aspirations of the United Mine Workers of America.

But the fighting spirit of the coal miners cannot and shall not be destroyed. They are fighting a noble battle in a just cause. They are fighting with the same heroic spirit of determination that made the heroes of 1776, when the people of this country fought against the domination of Great Britain in order that America should become a Republic. Men with courage such as the miners are imbued with, shall not falter. They shall not fail. They will make no surrender. The principles of justice must and shall triumph over the greed and opposition of the coal corporations.

In this battle of the miners and railroad men, let us all put our shoulder to the wheel and do our full share in the onward march for Justice, and let us proclaim to the world, that the time has come when the rights of the toiling masses of the nation must and shall be respected.

The mine owners are now about ready to try and operate their mines at greatly reduced wages, under the protection of State and Federal troops. They are of the opinion that the miners and their wives and children are about starved into submission, and that the men are ready to return to the mines. In this, however, they will be disappointed. They will understand fully, when the fight is ended, that the union coal miners of this country will not work under the protection of soldiers, and that they cannot be hoodwinked and deceived by the professional politicians and mine owners, as they have been in days gone by.

This is a critical time in the Miners' Union. All the strength of our Organization should be united in a mighty effort to strike a final blow for freedom and justice for the miners of America.

The miners and the railroad shop men are fighting the battle of the working class at this time, and they are slowly but surely bringing the coal and railroad corporations to their knees. The employers are beginning now to feel the power and strength of the workers, and the workers are beginning now to realize their own strength, when they stand united in a common cause.

So now, let all the power and energy of the workers of the entire nation be used to the full limit to assist the miners and railroad shop men, in the battle for their rights and for the uplift of the men and women who toil.
Let there be no backward step. Let there be no surrender. Let there be no compromise in fighting to establish the principles of Justice.

This is a fight that will be written in the pages of history. It will be an inspiration, not only to the workers of today, but to future generations. The fight of the miners and shop men will stand as a beacon light in the history of the Labor Movement.

So, on with the fight for Liberty and Justice. Let us all stand united in this great battle for the emancipation of the working class. If we do this, success will crown our efforts, and the obstacles that stand in the pathway of justice, great and powerful though they may be, will be swept aside in the onward march of the workers, and a brighter and better day will be near at hand for the toiling masses of our Republic.

Alexander Houston

President District No. 14.