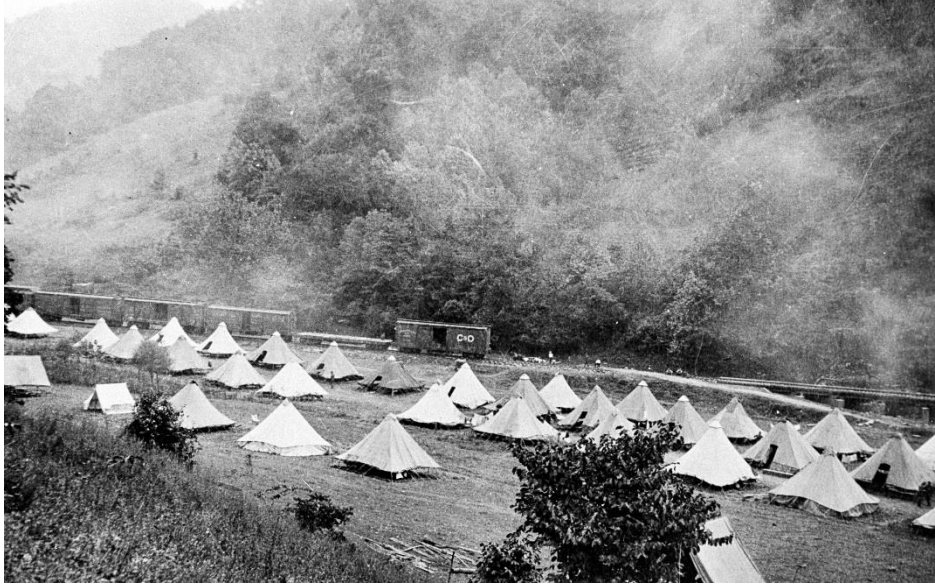


ON THIS DAY IN WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY FEBRUARY 7



On February 7, 1913, mine guards, operator Quinn Morton, and Kanawha County Sheriff Bonner Hill boarded an armored train known as the "Bull Moose Special." That evening, they attacked a miners' tent colony at Holly Grove on Paint Creek.

CSO: SS.8.9, SS.8.24, ELA.8.22, ELA.8.39

Investigate the Document: (*West Virginia History*, Vol. 52, 1993, "Eugene V. Debs in West Virginia, 1913")

A Reappraisal

1. What were Eugene V. Debs and other members of the Socialist Party of America committee sent to West Virginia to investigate?
2. What do you presume the phrase, "at loggerheads" means?
3. What was the function of role the Baldwin-Felts mine guards?
4. How did the three separate enactments of martial law in the "strike zones" violate the U.S. Constitution? What was the most severe violation of civil rights that occurred during the martial law enactments? What is martial law?
5. What proposals did the "Hatfield Contract" offer? What two major issues did it not address?
6. How did Debs and the committee canvass the area to formulate an accurate report of the situation in the Paint Creek and Cabin Creek mines?
7. Did the committee's report confirm or refute the notion that the socialists committee supported Governor Hatfield's actions?

Think Critically: What were the challenges the miners faced in attempting to strike against the coal operators? Describe the violations of civil and constitutional rights. Describe the conditions that existed in company towns during the early twentieth century.

- You have been asked by West Virginia Archives and History to create the text that will be inscribed on the historical highway marker titled “Bull Moose Special” to be erected in Holly Grove (Kanawha County). Use your knowledge of the event to create the text that will be recorded on the marker. (50-75 words)

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Eugene V. Debs In West Virginia, 1913:
A Reappraisal

By Roger Fagge

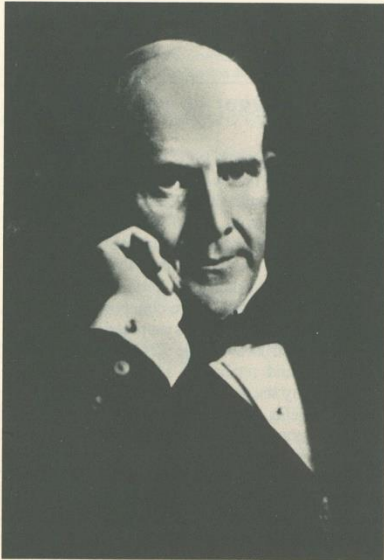
When Eugene V. Debs arrived in Charleston on May 17, 1913, he had no reason to anticipate the degree of controversy that would arise over his conduct during his short stay and the subsequent arguments that would take place. Debs, Adolph Germer and Victor Berger were members of a Socialist Party of America (SPA) committee sent to investigate the circumstances surrounding the year-long miners' strike in the Kanawha district, and found themselves thrown into an environment where local socialists and the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) were at loggerheads. Allegations arose that UMWA officials were conniving to maintain martial law and even supported Governor Henry D. Hatfield's suppression of the local socialist press. Additionally, confusion in the strike zone, the scene of unprecedented violence from the operators' mine guards and retaliatory action by the strikers, culminated in a messy "forced" settlement by the governor that pleased no one.

While this conflict presented many problems, on the surface at least, Debs would seem to have been the ideal person to get to the bottom of the situation and apportion the blame in America's "Little Russia." Yet, by the end of the committee's ten-day stay, Debs had been personally criticized by some local socialists and accused of "whitewashing" Hatfield and pandering to UMWA officials. The *Huntington Socialist and Labor Star* refused even to publish the committee's findings.¹ Nor was the dispute confined to West Virginia, as Wyatt H. Thompson, editor of the *Star*, Fred Merrick, temporary editor of the Charleston-based *Labor Argus*, and others conducted a vituperative campaign of criticism in the *International Socialist Review* and other socialist journals. Debs vigorously rebuffed his critics, denying their accusations and arguing that he had nothing to be ashamed of in the committee's findings.

One historian considering these events in detail, however, has accepted the claims of Debs's critics. David Corbin, in an article published in the *Journal of American History* in 1978, accepts the opinion that Debs was guilty of a "betrayal" of the miners and argues that his "policies and actions . . . contributed to the destruction of a growing, viable state Socialist movement." This, he suggests, must lead to a revision of the usually sympathetic picture of Debs painted by historians and necessitate a study of his actions and achievements rather than his ideals and rhetoric.² Corbin's article, the first published consideration of these events, influenced later historians

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Eugene Victor Debs (1855-1926) was a lifelong social and political activist. He was the Socialist party's presidential candidate in 1900, 1904, 1908, 1912 and 1920. Debs returned to West Virginia in 1918 as a federal prisoner, having been convicted under the Espionage Act for speaking out against U. S. involvement in World War I, and served two months at the state penitentiary in Moundsville before his transfer to the federal facility in Atlanta. His final presidential campaign was conducted from jail. President Harding commuted Debs's ten-year sentence in 1921. [Eugene V. Debs Home, Terre Haute, IN]

and has become the accepted interpretation in some general histories of the labor movement. For example, Philip Foner, in his *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, accepts Corbin's interpretation of events, although he does not comment on the alleged link between Debs's actions and the decline of socialism in West Virginia. Thus, Debs's response to his critics is rejected on the grounds that "scholars who have studied the controversy . . . have rejected Debs' charges." The two pieces of evidence cited to support this claim, however, are Corbin's article and an essay by W. H. Thompson in the *International Socialist Review* — hardly a dispassionate observer.³ The only historian who assesses these events and draws different conclusions is Nick Salvatore in his biography, *Eugene V. Debs: Citizen and Socialist*. However, the scope of his study allows only a brief examination of these incidents and he accepts Debs's account without fully addressing Corbin's conclusions.⁴

In light of these accounts and the unanswered questions they raise, it would seem that a reappraisal of Debs's actions is necessary. By examining what actually happened during the ten-day visit, the contents of the much-vaunted but seldom-

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analyzed report, the subsequent exchanges and the framework of relationships within which they operated, it is hoped to question whether or not Debs was guilty of any act of "betrayal." Also at issue is whether Corbin's argument relies upon a false estimation of the influence of the Socialist party in the coalfields and, consequently, the impact of the party's actions upon the local populace. Finally, it remains to be seen whether this ten-day visit, whatever the influence of Debs, could have substantially affected the fate of socialism in West Virginia and the United States generally in this period.

The coal strike which brought the committee to West Virginia began on April 20, 1912, after the Kanawha coal operators refused to sign a new agreement for union miners and returned to non-union wages and conditions.⁵ The dispute was partially settled two weeks later when three-fourths of the operators agreed to compromise and signed a new contract. However, the Paint Creek operators refused, and in August, the non-union miners on Cabin Creek joined the Paint Creek miners on strike.⁶ The operators responded to the strike by withdrawing union recognition, importing strikebreakers and hiring the hated Baldwin-Felts mine guards to "protect" their property.⁷ The lines were drawn for one of the most violent labor battles in West Virginia history.

As the strike progressed the catalogue of violence lengthened with the "Baldwin-Thugs," as they were dubbed, evicting miners from company houses and forcing them off company property. The intimidation, however, did not end there. The *United Mine Workers Journal* of June 13 reported one of the first instances of murder by the company guards when two miners were shot, including one who had wandered onto company property searching for a stray cow. The miners, many of whom were no strangers to the use of firearms, responded quickly. In an incident at Mucklow on July 26, miners and guards engaged in battle, with further loss of life and an estimated three thousand shots exchanged.⁸ Governor William E. Glasscock responded by sending the state militia into the strike zone.

In addition to the militia, the governor appointed a commission to examine the causes of the dispute. Neither the militia nor the committee provided much solace to the striking miners, because the militia, which was initially welcomed, proceeded to help the guards with evictions. Similarly, when the commission reported in November, it criticized some of the operators' actions, but also questioned the validity of all the miners' claims, stating, "we find that the operators are within their rights in declining to recognize a union which would place them in a helpless minority when joined to those of the four competitive states."⁹

The partiality of the state government and its agents was further proven during the remainder of the strike, when martial law was invoked on three occasions and military commissions were established to try offenders in the strike zones. These were repeatedly used against the strikers and, as a 1913 U. S. Senate hearing learned, not only did the military courts operate while civil courts were still functioning (a violation of

the Constitution), but defendants were denied the right of proper counsel.¹⁰ To make matters worse, operator-sponsored violence reached new depths when the "Bull Moose Special" roared through the miners' Holly Grove tent colony on the night of February 7, 1913, with coal operator Quin Morton, Kanawha County Sheriff Bonner Hill and several mine guards on board. The armor-plated train, equipped with machine guns, fired into the tent colony, killing one miner who was fleeing for safety and injuring one woman. The miners responded with an armed march on Mucklow on February 10, which was met midway by mine guards. Sixteen lives were lost in the ensuing battle. Martial law was again enforced with the detachment of additional state militia companies.¹¹

During this final period of martial law, the worst civil rights' violations occurred. Nearly three hundred strikers and their sympathizers were arrested and tried by military drumhead courts. Among these were Mother Jones, the indefatigable labor agitator who later smuggled out a note to U. S. Senator John W. Kern that provided the final impetus for the Senate hearing, and Charles H. Boswell, editor of the *Labor Argus*.¹² It was under these circumstances that Governor Henry D. Hatfield took office on March 5. In character with his "Progressive" politics, Hatfield professed concern for the strikers and immediately rushed into the strike zone to treat the injured. He also attempted to negotiate an agreement to end the strike, and released some of the prisoners held by the military. The situation seemed to be improving when several collieries settled in the Paint Creek district on March 21.¹³

The attempts at compromise, however, proved to be of little help to the strikers. Despite his apparent interest in the legal rights of the military prisoners, Hatfield did not prevent the military courts from operating, nor did he immediately release Mother Jones, Boswell, UMWA organizer and socialist John Brown or any other labor organizers. Likewise, the governor's terms for a settlement (the "Hatfield Contract" of April 14) offered the strikers little more than the state law already provided, if the "authorities" had only enforced it. The contract offered a nine-hour workday, the right to shop in independent stores, the right to elect checkweighmen and the promise of no discrimination against union miners. These proposals failed to address the two key issues of the strike, the right to organize and the removal of the mine guards. Similarly, the nine-hour day was already widely in use throughout the state.¹⁴ These conditions, though ineffectual, were reinforced by an ultimatum to "encourage" the miners' compliance. On April 25, Hatfield declared that the strikers accept the settlement or be deported from the state. Rather than submitting the contract to a rank-and-file referendum, UMWA officials convened selected delegates to vote on it. Pressured by Hatfield and the UMWA, the delegates accepted the proposals after a three-day debate.¹⁵

Hatfield's temper also proved short with those who continued to agitate against the settlement. In an act of great political shortsightedness, Hatfield suppressed the *Labor Argus* and then the *Huntington Socialist and Labor Star*. The raid on the latter, fifty miles from the martial law zone, took place on May 9. Militia, led by Major Tom Davis, entered the premises and destroyed type and printing materials, confiscated



Major Thomas Boyd Davis was instrumental in attempts to suppress the unionization of the southern West Virginia mines in 1912-13 and 1919-21. Ironically, Davis was a member and former president of the Huntington Local of the Machinist's Brotherhood. The *Huntington Socialist and Labor Star* reported on June 13, 1913, that the union expelled Davis for his participation in the raids on the socialist press. [West Virginia State Archives, Charleston, WV, hereafter WVSA]

various documents and arrested editor W. H. Thompson, Elmer Rumbagh (a reporter), F. M. Sturm (a former employee), and R. M. Kephart and G. W. Gillespie (officers of the Socialist Printing Company). The prisoners, residents of Cabell County, were then taken to the Kanawha County jail. Thompson's house was also raided despite protests from the local sheriff who argued that warrants were needed.¹⁶ This action, along with the continued imprisonment of forty-six miners and their sympathizers, was the latest in a long line of violated constitutional and civil rights that further focused national attention on "Medieval West Virginia" and brought such visitors as congressmen, journalists and Eugene V. Debs.

Debs arrived in Charleston on May 17 with Adolph Germer and registered at the Hotel Kanawha to await Victor Berger. Soon after his arrival, he made it clear that the committee was there with an open mind. He told reporters, "we do not know just what our line will be, and will not until we have conferred with local parties."¹⁷ He went on to say, "the present conflict is in no sense a personal one; so far as we are concerned there is no quarrel with individuals and we are animated by no spirit of personal vindictiveness. We are dealing with great social forces rather than with personalities. . . ." But he made a point of mentioning that "the country has the opinion that the miners in West Virginia are deprived of the right to organize," a situation which, if proven, "must be changed."¹⁸ It is testimony to Debs's appeal that he was received with a good deal of enthusiasm by local residents, and elements of the local

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press could hardly contain their admiration. The *Charleston Gazette*, after noting Debs's arrival, observed that

men and women of all classes and shades of political belief have called on him . . . they have basked in his sunny smile and enjoyed his brilliant conversations, which he adopts to his visitor's bent. Thus he has talked poetry or philosophy with some, reminisced with others and discussed politics in a broad way with yet others.¹⁹

Berger arrived on May 22 and the committee set off to visit the governor accompanied by Thomas Haggerty, a representative of the UMWA's national board. Initially only Debs was able to see Hatfield, but after a brief discussion the governor agreed to meet with the entire committee. The meeting appeared to have gone well and the socialists were promised the imprisoned activists would be released, the governor would recognize the right to organize and all strikers were guaranteed the return of their jobs. Debs commented ". . . we believe and are convinced that conditions are improving" and that the committee was "treated most cordially by the governor and we had a very satisfactory conference with him."²⁰ However, Debs's pleasure at the success of the meeting was tempered by the ensuing argument over statements attributed by the West Virginia press to the committee that seemed to suggest its members had endorsed Hatfield's earlier actions. The *Wheeling Intelligencer* claimed that the committee believed "Hatfield had adopted the right course," while the *Charleston Mail* claimed Debs had "changed his views materially and has confessed that he has been misled by false reports." The *Charleston Gazette* announced that Debs was "satisfied that the governor had given the miners fair and square treatment" and that he believed Hatfield "has been held responsible for some of those complications for which he is not responsible." The next day, the *Gazette* quoted Debs as saying he told Hatfield, "you have been placed in a false light" and "I have said some harsh things about you in print, but now I will correct them." Berger was also quoted as calling Hatfield "a fine manly man."²¹

The immediate reaction from sections of the local Socialist party was one of anger and disbelief at the governor seemingly being let off the hook. The Huntington Socialist local demanded an explanation of Debs's statements and the pro-labor *Wheeling Majority* wired him asking for clarification of the remarks suggesting he "endorsed" Hatfield's actions. Debs's reply was prompt and unequivocal. He told the paper that the reports were "absolutely false. You will receive the authentic report soon."²² On May 27, Debs angrily replied to his critics:

Since our committee has been in this City a persistent effort has been made to turn our members against us . . . by circulating reports that are either totally untrue or are but half truths. . . . I have made no statement that could even be tortured into that for which you have passed censure upon me, and I think your members should know me well enough to know that I would be incapable of such a betrayal of trust by my Comrades as I am seemingly charged with.²³

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An examination of the press accounts of the meeting and its aftermath establish Debs's defense was more than just rhetoric. Much of the criticism rested upon a literal interpretation of the reports in the local press, which was not altogether trustworthy. At no time did Debs endorse the past actions of the governor. The general tenet of his remarks was based on the belief that conditions *were* improving, with, for example, the release of the prisoners and the promise of the right to organize. These improvements notwithstanding, Debs, Germer and Berger sent a telegram on May 25, *three days after the meeting*, urging the Senate to accept the call for an investigation:

Conditions have improved under Governor Hatfield's administration, but . . . fundamental rights of citizenship were denied . . . the military and civil authorities substituted mob law for constitutional government. . . . The Senate owes to the nation a searching investigation of the long reign of lawlessness in the mining region of West Virginia.²⁴

This, as a statement of facts, was accurate, and would seem a more realistic guide to Debs's opinion than the reporting in the local press. Ironically, the *Huntington Socialist and Labor Star*, which became one of the most trenchant critics of Debs's activities, commented on May 30, *eight days after the Hatfield meeting*, that "it is realized great good has been done by the publicity given the situation since the National Committee began to act and that the work of Debs and his co-workers here was in a large measure responsible for the change of attitude of the state committee."²⁵

Following the consultations with the governor, the committee spent the remainder of its stay gathering information from other participants in the dispute. On May 24, the committee, accompanied by John Moore of the governor's office and Paul Paulsen of the UMWA, visited miners on Cabin Creek, spending most of the day at Eskdale. The *Kanawha Citizen* reported that the visitors found conditions better than they had expected and "were hailed with enthusiasm everywhere." This was followed by a visit to Paint Creek on May 25, where "some hours" were spent at Holly Grove and Mucklow. The committee visited New River the following day, before leaving the state.²⁶ Corbin, in his enthusiasm to criticize Debs, fails to mention these visits, claiming that Debs ". . . told reporters that he was in West Virginia to obtain the 'working class point of view,' but instead spent his time in the executive mansion obtaining Hatfield's point of view."²⁷

The committee's report appeared two weeks later and was met with a barrage of criticism from sections of the local Socialist party and with pleasure in the local press, which claimed Hatfield's vindication. The report, written by Debs, was neither one of his most radical pieces, nor one that would stand in posterity as his most important. But, considering the adverse conditions under which it was written and the wider political pressures that impinged upon its possible conclusions, it does not warrant the degree of criticism that was directed at it by some contemporaries and historians. The report was based, Debs claimed, on "every available source of reliable

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Tent colonies, like this one on Paint Creek, were a familiar sight during coal strikes. [West Virginia Coal Life Project, WVSA, hereafter WVCLP]

information” such as interviews with “local comrades, including those in prison” and “scores of strikers.” It began with a detailed examination of the Hatfield meeting, during which the governor’s disclaimers “for certain acts” were stated, as was his promise for the future guarantee of civil rights. While the report was certainly not as critical of the governor as could have been justified, it did not amount to a whitewash. In forthright terms, it denounced the attacks on the socialist newspapers as “utterly without warrant and subject to the severest censure.” It went on to state that:

For this arbitrary and despotic act there is no warrant in justice or under the law, and it becomes especially odious and reprehensible when it is considered that the office of the *Star* was demolished . . . and as if this had not been sufficiently outrageous, the home of the editor, Thompson . . . searched and burglarized . . . under the protest of the sheriff and local authorities. This dastardly crime cannot be too severely condemned and complete financial reimbursement would be the very least reparation that could possibly be made.²⁸

The report did not mention that Hatfield denied knowledge of the actions beyond the suppression of the papers, but the strength of the criticism stands by itself.

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Debs reported that the visits to Paint Creek and Cabin Creek were “accompanied over the entire route by numerous miners familiar with the situation, the committee made a house to house and tent to tent canvass, hearing the stories of men, women and children and witnessing scenes of horror and desolation [sic] which beggar description.” After confirming that the reports of the outrages had not been exaggerated, Debs praised the

. . . uniformly brave spirit and high character of the comrades who have been in the firing line in the West Virginia struggle. They have fought one of the bravest and bloodiest fights in the industrial history of this country. Against overwhelming odds and with spies and sluggers dogging their footsteps, they held their own to the very end.²⁹

The final section of the report reveals the constraints under which it was written and the tack which Debs would use to defend it in subsequent arguments. The committee had been shocked at the divisions between local socialists and UMWA officials over the conduct of the dispute. Thus, one of its central tasks was to attempt to create some sort of unity between the two organizations, even at the price of having to suppress their misgivings when the governor informed them that the UMWA had demanded the maintenance of martial law. The report noted “insidious influences have been and still are at work to create open rupture between the miners’ union and the Socialist Party” and stressed that “to prevent such a calamity, especially at such a critical hour, we bent our united energies.” The committee derided those who, to this end, made “false and misleading charges” as “allies” of the mine operators. Dealing specifically with the Hatfield meeting, the report attacked the “deliberate falsehood” that the committee had endorsed Hatfield and approved his actions, as “the wish in everything being the father of the thought.” The report ended by denying any unwarranted defense of the governor and exhorted local socialists and miners to

. . . cease all bickering as between themselves and enter upon a state-wide campaign of education and organization to the end that in the near future the workers of West Virginia might take front rank among the most thoroughly organized states in the union.³⁰

The report was presented by most of the local press as a vindication of Hatfield. The *Charleston Gazette*, *Wheeling Register*, *Wheeling Intelligencer*, *Charleston Mail*, *Huntington Herald-Dispatch* and many other state papers headlined with the claim that the report “exonerated” the governor.³¹ Most concentrated solely on the passages that corrected the picture of Hatfield, although some, like the *Gazette*, managed to mention the criticism of his closure of the socialist press. This line, although for different reasons, was adopted by some of the local socialists. The *Huntington Socialist and Labor Star*, refusing to print the report, described it as “a keen disappoint”[sic] but “no surprise for the West Virginia Socialists. They could have told at any time after the members of the committee began to give out interviews to the capitalist press at

Charleston, just what the document would deal with." W. H. Thompson then went on to claim that Debs was "sentimental" and had been duped by Germer, Berger and Hatfield into providing a "whitewash" of the latter.³²

Criticism was also forthcoming from others, including F. H. Merrick who claimed that "to all the horror which a strike of a year's duration in tents on the bleak winter mountains of 'Little Switzerland' means, was added the base conduct of those labor and so-called 'Socialist' parasites. . . ." Samuel Gompers, revelling in the opportunity to attack his socialist enemy, questioned the committee's sanity in giving a "clean bill of health" to Hatfield's administration, while the *Industrial Worker* claimed Debs had knifed the strikers in the back.³³

The bitter attack by the *Huntington Socialist and Labor Star* brought a strong response from Debs, who wrote from Terre Haute to demand that the paper print the report. "The report speaks for itself," he argued, "let the rank and file read and judge." When Thompson failed to do this, Debs wrote again defending the report, stating that he had done his best in a "very difficult situation. I went there determined to make any necessary sacrifice to see our comrades released from jail," he wrote, "and it does seem a bit strange that I should be abused the moment they got their liberty." He ended with the comment that "time will tell if our committee acted wisely and loyally or otherwise, and I for one have no fear of the ultimate verdict."³⁴

The possibility of winning the historical battle, however, was not aided by a statement earlier in the letter, when Debs declared, "I WOULD NOT CHANGE A SINGLE WORD OF IT." This proved to be unfortunate because the report contained one mistake concerning the trials of Mother Jones, C. H. Boswell and John Brown. The report claimed that they had been tried before Hatfield had come into office, when in fact the trials had taken place just after his inauguration. This fact, however, hardly invalidated the case Debs had made, and to his credit, he wrote to the *Huntington Socialist and Labor Star* on July 4 to admit his mistake.³⁵

As the controversy dragged on, it not only became more bitter, but crystallized around the dispute over tactics towards the UMWA and consequently, the approach the socialists were to adopt. Coming soon after the expulsion of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), the debate served to air the different interpretations of industrial unionism.³⁶ In a sharp letter to John Brown on June 26, Debs argued "the way to keep reactionary trade union officials in power is to attack them as Merrick has been doing and their followers adhere to them all the more closely." Debs attacked this "mad denunciation of every thing U. M. W., good, bad and indifferent" as "suicidal and destructive all around" and characteristic of elements in the West Virginia Socialist party that were "just enough for political action to cloak their anarchy."³⁷ Debs also repeated the charges made in the report in an article in the August edition of the *International Socialist Review*. He reasserted that "a certain element was hostile" to the UMWA and argued "I am quite well aware that there are weak and crooked officials in the United Mine Workers, but to charge that they are all

traitors without exception is outrageously false and slanderous." Furthermore, he argued, "the United Mine Workers is steadily evolving into a thoroughly industrial union and in time it will certainly become so, but never in a thousand years will the efforts of these disruptors unionize the miners of West Virginia or any other state." Thompson's reply, in the same issue, again pointed to the alleged "'whitewashing of a cheap political tool of the capitalist class'." He also, in what historian Frederick Barkey termed "quite a stretch of the truth," denied ever having seen "a real live IWWite."³⁸

While Barkey has suggested that the IWW were not particularly active in West Virginia, a fact supported by the autobiography of Ralph Chaplin, IWW activist and associate editor of the *Socialist and Labor Star* during the strike, there is little doubt that the IWW outlook influenced the left wing of the West Virginia Socialist party.³⁹ Harold Houston, a party official and UMWA counsel told striking miners at Holly Grove in August 1912, "I have become in recent years what they call a 'Haywardite.' [sic] Some of my friends in the State say I must be removed from office because I believe in direct action. Gentlemen, I believe in action that gets results, and, as Bill Hayward [sic] says, 'The more direct the better'."⁴⁰ Thompson also talked in July 1913 of initiating "these mountaineers into the mysteries of Twentieth century fighting tactics, including a thorough working knowledge of that powerful weapon — industrial unionism — One Big Union, in which the rank and file decide all questions for themselves."⁴¹ West Virginia was also one of only ten states to vote against the recall of Haywood from the National Executive Committee for his New York speech, by a margin of only three votes.⁴²

This IWW "influence" was to some extent balanced by the dual commitment to political action (Houston, for example, later in his speech urged the miners to vote for Debs), but it could not hide the distance between Debs's approach to working with the UMWA and attempting to improve what he felt was already in some ways an industrial union. This was a view that was also shared by more moderate elements of the state Socialist party who resented the enforced settlement, but shared Debs's view that tactics demanded unity of action with the UMWA. The *Wheeling Majority*, for example, had taken a far more sympathetic line to the committee's report.⁴³

Perhaps the most galling fact for Debs was that this policy of cooperation was interpreted as condoning all of the activities of District 17 President Thomas Cairns and UMWA organizers Thomas Haggerty, who had negotiated the settlement, and Joseph Vasey. Tactically the idea was to build on the positive aspects of the union, so as ultimately to remove officials like the latter. This must have been even more difficult, because criticisms of the officials were coming from various sources and were in many cases justified. Hatfield's settlement was also criticized on many sides. Fred Mooney, future secretary of District 17, noted in his autobiography that he had "bitterly opposed the terms of the settlement . . . and had criticized officers of the union for what seemed to me to be a partial surrender of the miners' demands."⁴⁴ The news that the officials had also, as mentioned earlier, asked the governor to continue