

I. W. W. STATEMENT

To whom it may concern:

On account of the glaringly inflammatory article, featured as the leading news story in Monday morning's Examiner, June 16, insinuating that the I. W. W. was planning to place a dynamite bomb under the Cleveland mortuary, where the forty-eight bodies of the sailors, who died on the Mississippi as a result of the explosion, were lying in state, the membership feels that a failure to reply would be construed as a tacit admission as well as indifference to the calumnious falsehoods that are circulated in regard to the attitude of the local membership toward the calamity, aboard the ill-fated battleship.

Ordinarily the organization would not feel the need to resort to publication of denials, but when, without any thought of such a nature, it awakens to the realization that in a metropolitan newspaper, circulating over all of Southern California, there is printed a statement that the I. W. W. threatened to "blow up" the undertaking parlor in retaliation for a raid on the hall, then our organization, collectively and individually, feels that forbearance is no longer a virtue and desires to refute this reckless imputation with all the vehemence at its command.

Analyzing the local situation in a resume of incidents culminating in the riot of Saturday night, we find the I. W. W. conducted a peaceable strike in this harbor over a year ago.

On March 1st, 1924, there was a demonstration by the Ku Klux Klan, which was heralded as a warning that the Klan would brook no repetition of a strike on the water-front.

On March 17th, the I. W. W. hall was raided and furniture thrown into the street.

On May 6th, there was another raid when women and children were arrested and subjected to unspeakable indignities.

On May 30th, the K. K. K. held a meeting at the ball park from whence the report was circulated that the "wobblies" chased the Salvation Army from its corner and that therefore the wobblies should be chased out of town.

Since it was announced that at this meeting two petty officers and a score of navy men were initiated into the secrets of the Klan this was no doubt made the slogan for the express benefit of the new Konverts.

We are confident that the Salvation Army will admit that they abandoned their old corner voluntarily.

During all these events the I. W. W. adhered to its attitude of passive resistance, because the I. W. W. is a labor union and opposed to violence.

The courts had ruled that mere membership in itself was not illegal.

This evidently nettled the factions that had hoped the wobblies would fall over each other in their eagerness to renounce their principles.

At this psychological stage the nation was shocked by the news of the calamity that sent forty-eight sailors to Eternity.

On June 14th, a quiet entertainment was in progress at the I. W. W. hall, and rather than being a boisterous affair as the papers stated, was attended with a peculiar reverence in that it was given for the express purpose of raising funds to defray the expense for the burial of two of our own members.

Suddenly without any previous warning, doors and windows were smashed in and those on the inside attacked by a savage mob, armed with clubs and guns.

In this statement we are not concerned with the question of who composed the mob, beyond mention that many navy uniforms were in evidence.

Those who wore plain clothes had a white band around their arms as a distinguishing mark to keep from murdering one another.

Men were being clubbed right and left and the clubs were clotted with blood.

A private residence across the street was first entered and the parlor turned into a shambles. None were spared in the sanguinary carnage of the mad orgy to satiate a lust for blood. Two little boys, five and seven years of age are still hovering on the brink of death from burns—it makes one sick to see their little limbs swathed in bandages.

Several women were scalded and two in particular had to be taken to the hospital in an ambulance. Little nine year old Lena Milos, a most winsome, lovable, bright and talented child, was so badly scalded and maltreated that gravel is still being picked out of the cuticle.

One might naturally suppose that the sight of such inhuman atrocities would cause the blood of every red-blooded man with a spark of manhood, to reach the boiling point, yet no violence or even defense was resorted to on the part of the I. W. W. None had any thought of such an attack, yet after the furniture was burned, a truck took six members to a canyon forty miles away, where five were treated to an application of tar while another was given the Mussolini treatment, by being forced to drink a quart of castor oil while \$82.00 in cash was taken by the mob.

Among the twenty-five or more automobiles that accompanied the truck, was one containing a woman and a girl, who could not help but witness the revolting character of the proceedings.

Not until the following day was there any intimation that—"it was reported" what someone heard disrespectful utterances anent the Mississippi dead.

Is it not strange that not one person was found who heard any such remarks?

Would you convict the measliest cur on the mere assumption that "it was reported?"

The I. W. W., unlike other organizations, requires no pass-word for admission to its meetings.

Does it seem reasonable to any sane mind that under such circumstances the I. W. W. would think of desecrating the dead?

Where is the mythical "police officer of the harbor district," and what sort of an officer was he, who "heard two I. W. W. members plotting to bomb the undertaking establishment?" Why did he not arrest them? What possible motive could conjure such a plot, where there was nothing to gain and everything to lose?

The I. W. W. are not ghouls. Their program is constructive and not destructive.

Under such a situation a cub reporter from the Examiner, who evidently allowed his zeal

to addle his brain, handed in a sensational report to thus curry favor with his employer.

After having been extended every courtesy and from whom we had nothing to conceal, this reporter sends in a report, concocted in malice and prejudice, that for sheer mendacity is only comparable to the nincompoop's warped conceit, when he disregards the rudimentary ethics of his calling by hiding behind the statement that "it has been reported" in dealing with an issue as grave as inciting the readers to seek reprisals that might result in riot.

Neither the I. W. W. nor its members has any grudge against the sailors. We share their grief just as we mourn the loss of life in the mines when, to save the mines, they are either flooded or sealed with workingmen in a living tomb.

So on the solemn occasion of the rites over the dead, the I. W. W. unqualifiedly and without reserve, disavows any exultation that unscrupulous lick-spittles seek to lay at our door!

The I. W. W. of this city has at no time by word, deed or thought, countenanced any unfavorable expression that might be interpreted as a reflection on the valor of the unfortunate victims of the terrible calamity.

While much more could be said in this connection, if the long train of persecution and violence committed against us, with not a single untoward act on our part, we have endeavored to confine this statement to only the essential facts, as they developed since the initial demonstrations, staged as a "warning" on the first of March here in San Pedro.

We have endeavored to refrain from animus in this statement, though we could not give the facts without referring to certain details.

The I. W. W. is striving for justice for the working class and because it is a labor union, and has been most consistent, is the reason for the attacks and the vilification, by interests that can wallow in the proceeds of graft, filched from the nation, the while they act as though a soldier bonus might bankrupt the world.

I. W. W. PUBLICITY COMMITTEE.

San Pedro, California, June, 17th., 1924.