

Foster Tells of Strike of 20,000 Coal Miners Spreading; Fight On in Face of Difficulties

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER.

PITTSBURGH, Pa., June 9. — As I write this, the coal strike continues to spread. There are already about 20,000 miners on strike, and the number constantly increases. Every day new mines are added, to those already out. Now the committee is taking steps to spread the struggle into Ohio and West Virginia. The workers there are in a strong mood for strike. Already some mines have gone out. Conferences, mass meetings are being arranged. The strike wave spreads south and west.

This is a strike against starvation. Conditions in the mines have simply

become unbearable and the workers are in a state of revolt. Unemployment is about fifty percent, and those who have jobs work a couple of days a week. The miners are refusing to starve. In the face of a thousand difficulties they are drawing their forces together in a desperate struggle against the operators and famine conditions.

Bosses Fear Miners' Militancy.

The capitalist press is fully aware of the vital significance of this strike. They see the wonderful militancy of the workers and they don't fail to note the meaning of these workers following the leadership of the revolutionary National Miners

Union. These papers reflect the great alarm of the capitalists of this vicinity at the rapid spread and unparalleled militancy of this strike. In the face of thousands, of state police, coal and iron police, deputy sheriffs and gun men of every description, the workers advance militantly with the spreading of the great strike. The whole body of workers here—steel, etc.—are greatly aroused by this strike. The unemployed miners are showing real militancy.

U. M. W. A. Strikebreaker.

The strike is developing clearer than ever the strike-breaking character of the U. M. W. A. The bosses

are depending on this organization, together with the mass of armed thugs, to break the strike. Their plan is, while terrorizing N. M. U. picketers, to engineer some sort of fake settlement thru the UMWA and then try to force the workers to accept it. The whole local press unite in one chorus with the slogan "Why not revive the UMWA?" On all sides the propaganda is made that this organization must be rebuilt or the coal operators will have a real union to contend with.

The big fly in the ointment, however, for them in this plan is that

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the UMWA is badly discredited and has no mass basis among the miners in this district. Many years of betrayal have undermined the corrupt Lewis outfit among the workers. But the local UMWA fakers are trying to overcome this by extensive mass activities. They are setting up fake locals in various parts of the coal fields. But the miners refuse to participate. For example in Coverdale the U. M. W. A. set up a "local" consisting of 10 ex-miners working on the county road who were mobilized for the meeting by the local squire and superintendent of roads. Similar locals are established elsewhere.

The press is doing all possible to assist the UMWA in re-establishing its shattered ranks by giving it a strong play up in the publicity and making things appear as if it were a leading force in the strike. Never was there a more brazen attempt by the bosses to actually build a strike-breaking organization under the guise of a labor union. The near future will certainly bring forth in this strike the rankest exhibition of

open-strike-breaking ever made by any union in this country.

This strike is taking on national proportions. If there is a successful spread into Ohio and West Virginia, the question will then arise of developing a national movement. This may probably necessitate the calling of a national miners convention or conference. Meanwhile the miners of Illinois, Indiana, the Anthracite should be reached with every possible force, acquainted with the course and significance of the struggle here and stimulated to begin local struggles. The linking of these together will come with the development of the national movement. The question of a national struggle of the miners is fully much a question of forces on our part. The miners are ready for struggle. The great problem is to reach them soon enough to bring them into this spreading strike. To rouse the miners of the other districts must not be left to the N. M. U. alone. That is the job of all our forces.

In the meantime relief organizations and collections must be started everywhere. The miners were starving even before the strike. Now

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