

COKE MINERS RAZZ FAGAN FOR SPEECH

Want to Fight Bosses, Not Progressives

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MARIANNA, Pa., Nov. 18.—Several thousand miners from various parts of the coke region gathered together in mass meeting in this city Sunday, November 15, to express their solidarity with the men who are out on strike against the attempts of the Bethlehem Steel corporation to enforce the 1917 scale. The mass meeting, held in open air, was arranged by the Union Mine Workers of America. Philip Murray and Fagan, president of the Union Mine Workers, District No. 5, were present to address the meeting.

The police and the armed sheriffs were conspicuous by their absence while the thousands of miners were gathering in trucks and busses, full of enthusiasm and determination to fight to the very limit for a living wage and for the union. Every one was anxious to hear what the head of the Miners' Union of District No. 5, had to say about the situation. Every one was waiting for the president of District No. 5 of the U. M. W. to outline before this historic gathering a plan of action against the outrageous actions of the operators.

Wants No Fight With Bosses.

After speakers addressed the huge gathering in Italian and Croation, Fagan mounted the platform and opened his speech with a plea for unity of all factions in the organization. He then proceeded to "praise" the U. M. W. of A. for its being a peaceful organization always ready to meet the operators at a "round table" to discuss agreements in order to avoid a fight.

He followed this up by further

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praising the U. M. W. of A. for having sent not less than 80,000 coal diggers to the slaughter-house during the world war to fight for "democracy," stating that the U. M. W. of A. was in a position during the war to tie up every industry in the country and thus prevent America from going into war. The union for "patriotic" reasons did not take advantage of its power at that time, but instead did everything possible to help make the war a success.

After a brief denunciation of Charlie Schwab, head of the Bethlehem Steel corporation, who also took an active part in the world war and is now waging a new war against the miners and their union, Mr. Fagan proceeded to bitterly attack and denounce the progressive miners and the Workers Party.

In his rage against the progressive elements of the Miners' Union, he forgot all about the situation in Marianna and the iron fences around the mines here. He forgot to mention the eviction of the miners from the company houses and about the armed guards who were protecting the scabs against the striking miners.

Only two days previously armed hirelings of the company were using tear bombs to disperse a group of miners and their wives and sisters, but Fagan had not a word to say about this. Only two days ago a striking miner, who had served in the army during the world war, was beaten up by the police, and was now standing on the platform holding the American flag with his head still bandaged, but the president of the Miners' Union of District No. 5 had forgotten even to mention this.

Miners Show Hot Resentment.

Instead, he indulged in a tirade against the progressive miners and the Workers Party, misrepresenting facts, and telling all kinds of lies in order to achieve his aims. This was too much for the men who had gathered together to organize for a struggle against the 1917 scale and for the preservation of the union.

Shouts "It is a lie," "We challenge you to prove it," "We came to fight the operators and not the militants in our union" rang thru the audience preventing the speaker from continuing his tirade. Some of the machine men responding with shouts, "Throw them out," meaning the Communists and the progressive miners.

The situation became too tense and Fagan hurriedly concluded his speech without mentioning a word about the situation in Marianna and in other parts of the coke region.

The meeting was called for the purpose of organizing against the onslaughts of the Bethlehem Steel corporation and other coal companies. It was turned by Fagan into a meeting against the progressive elements in the union who have been demanding action and not words from their officials. That is exactly what the Bethlehem Steel corporation is anxious to see Fagan do. Nothing could please the Bethlehem Steel corporation more than did the action of Mr. Fagan at the meeting last Sunday.