

# "Efficiency Unionism" in Illinois Mines; Some Ways to Fight It

By ARNE SWABECK

The tipples at the Illinois mines are now busy hoisting coal. The miners are back at their jobs, working under a six months truce arrangement. In Indiana a similar truce has been made. Meanwhile the union is facing a life and death struggle in Ohio and Western Pennsylvania.

The policy of national agreements based upon the Central Competitive Field has been abandoned by the union leadership. This is playing directly into the hands of the operators and weakening the union.

The strategy of the coal operators is clear. They aim to keep the miners of Illinois and Indiana at work while they continue their efforts to smash the union in Ohio and in Western Pennsylvania. Later they hope to be in a stronger position to deal with the former.

## Frank Open Shop Statements

The operators have now been able to strike a real blow in their union smashing campaign through the sweeping injunction secured from the Federal Judge F. P. Shoomaker forbidding practically all strike activities and even compelling eviction of the miners from their homes.

Upon this injunction the Pittsburgh Post Gazette commented editorially as follows: "Many declare that this action of the mine operators is the final drive to make this great state open-shop throughout. A number of leading industries of the state are now on that basis."

In Ohio a similar campaign for the "open shop" is being carried on. And when recently the officials of the United Mine Workers of the district, moved by the truce arrangement in Illinois, made overtures to the operators asking that negotiations take place, the President of the Ohio Coal Operators association, S. H. Robbins, declared: "Ohio operators have exhausted all efforts to deal with the United Mine Workers of America, and we are not interested in any further proposals."

## Breaking Down Illinois Conditions

The intention of complete destruction of the union in these two important fields, while the Illinois and Indiana miners are working, is clear. Through the policy of separate district agreements John L. Lewis and his fellow bureaucrats have deliberately aided these efforts of the operators.

Meanwhile in Illinois the operators are pursuing their program of doing away with union conditions within the mines. Loading machines are being installed eliminating labor. The surplus miners are told to go to other industries. Working rules for operation of machines are to be settled by the commission selected to study the district mining problem composed of the presidents and vice presidents of the union district and of the operators' association. On disputed points this commission may enlarge itself, according to the temporary settlement, and a majority vote then becomes binding. In other words such disputes will be settled, not by agreement, but by arbitration.

## "Yellow Dog" Contracts.

Cheating the miners in weight on coal loaded has been a long established practice. The loaded cars must pass so rapidly over the scale that the checkweighmen, representing the union, have no time to make a proper check. Actual yellow dog contracts are being put into operation here and there and where miners could formerly leave the mine when sufficient cars had been loaded to make a day's wage, that is now something of the past.

## Fishwick Forecasts Wage Cut.

The Illinois truce extends the agreement existing prior to the strike, including the Jacksonville scale to April 1, 1928. Meanwhile the com-

mission, formerly mentioned, is to study the problem and report its findings by Feb. 1. Indicative of what this report may be is a statement already made by the district president, Harry Fishwick, that if sufficient reasons can be shown warranting a wage cut such will be recommended. The operators in the organized fields will point to the ever increasing competition from the unorganized fields (from mines mostly owned by themselves) and such arguments seems to take well with the high paid officials. The latter will perhaps point to the fact that the Illinois district is compelled to face the battle alone—made possible only by the treacherous policy of district settlements. One thing is certain, already now throughout the state a campaign of propaganda is being carried on for the inevitability of a wage cut.

## Concrete Fighting Measures.

For the Illinois coal miners there is no other course open than to continue the fight although now under different forms. The rank and file have a great fighting tradition and only their militant actions can save the union. It is necessary to take up an intensive campaign to prevent the designs of future annihilation, with particular concentration on the following points:

1. Decisive condemnation of the splitup policy embodied in the district settlement basis, and more so, condemnation of the arbitration clause.
2. Relief actions must be carried on for the districts still on strike as any weakening of the miners in Western Pennsylvania and Ohio will spell disaster to the Illinois district.
3. In every locality the rank and file should fight vigilantly for complete restoration of union working rules within the mines. Any weakening at this point means weakening of the union as a whole.
4. United opposition is necessary to any victimization attempts by the operators or expulsions by the union bureaucrats.
5. A widespread campaign should be initiated against any wage cuts so that both the operators and the union officialdom may know that the miners will not stand for any deterioration of their standard of living. Such a campaign well organized will help steel the miners to meet the inevitable onslaught of the operators.
6. An important part of the general activities is a live struggle within the union for reestablishment of the national agreement basis and a national united front against the operators.
7. With this must follow an in-

sistent demand and actual measures for the organization of the unorganized fields.

8. In order to more effectively meet the united front of the operators and the governmental institutions the miners' locals should take the leadership in formation of local labor parties everywhere.

9. Finally the rank and file membership should demand complete control of the negotiations being carried on for the future agreement and demand that a special district convention be called, or that the regular convention date be so fixed, to consider the report to be made by the commission by Feb. 1, 1928. No agreement to be finally entered until thus ratified by the rank and file workers.

The militants are naturally expected to take the leadership in initiating these measures. Upon them rests a great task. It is the life of the union itself which is at stake.

## Nicum Runs in Dayton On a Pure and Simple "Jim Crow" Program

DAYTON, Ohio, Nov. 1.—W. V. Nicum, who recently in a campaign speech announced that "any man who sells his property to a Negro in a white territory should be tarred and feathered," has got out a leaflet boasting himself for the city commission which continues the argument against Negroes in slightly modified language.

Nicum declares for "keeping the control of the destinies of Dayton in the hands of the white citizens," and "favors the use of every legal and fair means to prevent the colonization of colored people in white streets and blocks in any part of the city."

Neither does Nicum define in this leaflet what he means by "legal and fair" means.

A further plank is for "Jim Crow" schools, "Jim Crow" parks, "Jim Crow" playgrounds and "Jim Crow" community centers.

Dayton is a large industrial center, the home of the National Cash Register business, and desperate measures are adopted to keep white and colored workers from solidarity with each other.

## KAISER'S STEPSON DIES.

BERLIN, Nov. 1. — Prince George Wilhelm, second son of Princess Hermine and stepson of the former Kaiser, died today in Silesia as the result of injuries received when his motorcycle collided with a farm wagon.

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