

THAT
"VICTORY"
of the
COAL-MINERS

Analyzed by
THE I. W. W.



Published by the
INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE
WORLD

1001 W. Madison St., Chicago, Ill.

THE PREAMBLE

OF THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD.

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the earth and the machinery of production, and abolish the wage system.

We find that the centering of management of the industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or in all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system."

It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for the every-day struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

The "Victory" of the Coal-Miners

1922 Strike Ends In a Pyrrhic Victory.

Once upon a time there was a king of Epirus and Macedonia by the name of Pyrrhus. This king made war upon the Romans. In one of his battles, at Asculum, "victory" was bought with such heavy losses that the king is said to have exclaimed, "**Another such victory and Pyrrhus is destroyed.**" Ever since, a success won at such a ruinous cost as to be equal to defeat is often called a "Pyrrhic victory." And it is in that sense we refer to the settlement of the coal-miners' strike of 1922 as a Pyrrhic victory. Another such "victory" and the miners will be destroyed."

What The Miners Demanded.

In their reconvened convention in Indianapolis, February 14-18, 1922, the delegates of the United Mine Workers of America formulated the following principal demands:

1. The six-hour day.
2. The five-day week.
3. The present scale in the bituminous mines and an increase of about 20 per cent in the anthracite mines.
4. Removal of inequitable differen-

tials in wages. This would result in increased wages in some fields.

5. Pay and one-half for overtime work.

6. Double pay on Sunday and holiday work.

7. All new contracts to obtain for two years.

These demands having been rejected by the coal-mine owners, the coal-miners, over 500,000 strong, went out on strike on April 1st, 1922, instructing their leaders to stand by these demands to the last ditch.

What the Miners Got. The Dicker Made by the Leaders.

With a faithfulness and a solidarity unequalled in labor's history, the miners held out for these demands for over five months, undergoing unspeakable hardship in order to create for themselves a standard of living worthy of human beings.

During the early part of September, 1922, both the bituminous and the anthracite miners went back to work, with the exception of the miners of the Connellsville district in Pennsylvania and the Kanawha district in West Virginia, about 10 per cent of the 45,000 miners in the Pittsburgh district and some others to whom the blessings of the "victory" did not extend.

And what were the terms of the settlements made by the machine of the leaders? Wherein does the victory consist?

The settlement is contained in two agreements: **The Cleveland agreement** for the bituminous miners and the **Philadelphia agreement** for the anthracite miners.

The Cleveland Agreement.

By the terms of this agreement, entered into by the Cleveland Interstate Conference in the latter part of August, all bituminous miners return to work at the **same wage** scale and under **the same working conditions** as prevailed when they suspended work on April 1st. This agreement is to remain in effect until March 31, 1923, with the provision for a **fact finding commission**, to investigate the coal industry, and the selection of a **sub-committee of operators and miners** at a joint conference in Cleveland on October 2nd, to determine methods of negotiating future wage scales.

Compare these terms of settlement with the original demands and see if you can locate the victory!

The Philadelphia Agreement.

The Philadelphia conference between representatives of the anthracite operators and the 155,000 anthracite miners, which began on August 17th, was brought about in response to the request of the President of the United States.

On September 9th, the anthracite strike was ended, when the tri-district convention in Wilkesbarre, Pa., voted

“unanimously” to ratify the report of the scale committee, accepting the settlement reached some time before by operators and United Mine Workers’ officials in Philadelphia.

This agreement provides for **continuation of the old wages** that were in effect on March 31, 1922, demands that **production of coal begin at once**, and makes recommendations that a **fact-finding committee** be appointed by the congress to investigate the industry.

Again you are asked to compare these terms of settlement with the strike demands of the miners, as given above, and see if you can locate the victory.

The Boastful Claims of the Leaders

In order to prove to you the flim-flam methods and the utter insincerity of your leaders, we will quote an editorial in the issue of September 1, 1922, of the **United Mine Workers’ Journal**, the official organ:

“...But look at the result for a moment! President Lewis, as the leader of the strike, not only saved the wage scale of the miners, but he saved also every working condition that the miner enjoyed before the strike began. He prevented a reduction in wages which a bunch of district offi-

cialssaid was inevitable. President Lewis forced a settlement that may be designated as either an interstate or a national settlement. He prevented disastrous district settlements which the gloom dispensers said must be adopted as the only way to end the strike."

"In short, the miners won a tremendous victory under the leadership of President Lewis, in spite of those who opposed him."

"The membership of this union know who it was that led them to victory in their great fight for justice, and they know also who it was that tried to keep President Lewis from achieving the victory."

Could brazen effrontery go much further! If the coal-miners can stand for this insult to their intelligence, then, certainly, the worst is in store for them.

Do the leaders think that the members of the United Mine Workers' have lost their memory through their suffering, so that they can no longer remember what they went out on strike for, five months earlier? Or do they simply take them for damn fools and suckers, without pride, without manhood? Can they, and will they "get away with" such knavery? It is up to the rank and file of the coal-miners to answer such questions.

Miners Betrayed On the Eve Of Victory.

To cover up their misdeeds the leaders ignore entirely what the strike was for, and talk chestily of how they "saved the old wage scale" (the scale the miners struck against) and the old working conditions which the miners "enjoyed" before the strike (the very conditions they struck against)! They also point with pride to having frustrated the attempt of the employers to "smash the union", when in fact, the union is allowed to exist only after giving up practically all that it stood for. What the leaders saved was their own jobs. What the rank and file "got" was the loss of five months' pay, the same old rotten conditions back, and the retention of the check-off!

In fact, we do not hesitate to state that the settlement looks like a dirty political deal, or sell-out, or both.

The coal-miners were about to win a real victory, when the signal was given to quit, throwing half a million men into helpless confusion.

President of U. S. Acknowledges Operators' Defeat.

How near the coal-miners were to a real victory may be surmised from the fact that the administration was compelled to step in and throw its heavy sword into the scales, in favor of the operators, as evidenced by the

president's communication to the governors of all coal producing states to resume coal production "under government protection," that is, to break the strike by armed force, in the last instance.

On this point we wish to quote the rather shameful admission of the President of the United States in his recent **Special Message to Congress**:

"Under these circumstances..... the government had no other course than to invite a resumption of production under the rights of all parties to the controversy, **protection** of each and everyone in his lawful pursuits. This fact was communicated to governors of all coal producing states, and with two exceptions assurance of maintained law and order were promptly given. In some instances concrete proof of effective readiness to protect all men, strikers and non-striking workmen alike, was promptly given. **But little or no new production followed. The simple but significant truth was revealed that, except for such coal as comes from the districts worked by unorganized miners, the country is at the mercy of the United Mine Workers.**"

Here we have an uncontradictable official admission that the strike was all but won, two or three weeks be-

fore the disgraceful and disastrous settlements made by the leaders.

We leave it to the rank and file to conjecture what their leaders did behind the curtain.

One thing seems certain, and that is that the union is merely a big stick in the hands of the leaders, by means of which they hold up the enemy for their own selfish ends.

To What Extent Did Politics Enter Into the Sell-Out of the Miners?

We have no means of knowing the details of the political deal possibly back of the strike settlement. Such deals are not made in the presence of I. W. W. members. But we may draw some conclusions from the general situation and from official utterances.

A country-wide election is in progress or is impending. The president and the party in power are anxious for success in that election. The coal strike threatened the country with a general calamity unless the demands of the strikers were acceded to. To have allowed the strike to continue would have spelt disaster to the administration and the party it represents. It became necessary to get the coal strike out of the way at any price, except by granting the demands of the workers.

What may be the price for the retreat signal in the coal industry? Those who observe events in the future will know.

Leaders Give Away the Secret.

From an editorial in the "United Mine Workers' Journal," of September 1st, we quote the following:

"There was very little encouragement in the attitude of the President (of U. S.) during the strike that indicated a friendly interest in the welfare of the miners. In fact, **the miners won the strike** without any encouragement from the President."

Is this attempt to paint the defeat as the miners' own victory merely an effort to take the odium of the terrible disappointment away from the administration and the Republican party and gently placing it on the miners' own shoulders?

How close the connection was, and is, between the politician in power and the leaders of the miners may be surmised from the terms and the wording of the settlements compared with the wording of the President's Special Message to Congress.

We quote here a few lines from the said message:

... "In substance I called upon the operators to open their mines and the mine workers to resume

work at the **same pay** and under the **same working conditions** as prevailed at the time the strike began. In turn, the government was to create at once **a coal commission**, or two of them if preferred. . . .”

As will be seen from the above quotation, which is almost word for word like the text of the settlements, those settlements were originally outlined by the Republican administration and not by the miners' union, as some of the innocent and gullible rank and file may imagine.

It is apparent that the leaders of the strike “forgot” the mandates and the orders of the Indianapolis convention which formulated the demands, and, instead, took their mandates and orders from the other side.

This is the only conclusion one can arrive at by logical reasoning, if circumstantial evidence is to be trusted at all.

The sum total of it is that, through the manipulations of the machine inside the United Mine Workers' of America, the terrible strike pressure was instantly dissipated, the solidarity was broken, and half a million starved miners in rags returned to slavery.

The sacrifice was entirely in vain.

The machine is still on top, the check-off is saved, and deep down in

the black bowels of the earth a few hundred thousand grimy and emaciated slaves are either celebrating the "victory" in dumb submission or boiling with rage at the betrayal, each one according to the degree of his intelligence.

What Is Wrong With the Miners And The U. M. W. of A.?

The coal strike of 1922 and the scandalous settlement of it will forever remain one of "the black spots" in labor's history. Future generations will point to it as the most gigantic example of betrayal of the rank and file by their leaders.

But how can such monstrous things come to pass? What is wrong with the miners and their union?

We can here answer such questions only briefly.

The main thing that is **wrong with the miners** is that they have not received the right kind of education.

The main thing that is **wrong with their union** is that it is ruled by a machine of selfish, ignorant or vicious leaders, while the majority of the rank and file content themselves with paying tribute to that machine in order to be left alone, consenting to have their dues "checked off" in the company office.

