

What About The Anthracite?

By GEORGE PAPCUN

THE rank and file in the anthracite must ask itself a few questions, and it also must begin to understand that the crisis in the soft coal is bound up closely with the future of the union in the hard coal region. That also now the very existence of the national union is threatened and that slowly but surely the union in the anthracite is beginning to be company unionized. In very many territories and local unions it is actually company controlled and functions in behalf of the company.

We, the mine workers in the anthracite, after asking a few questions, will come to the conclusion that we must rid ourselves of the rotten leadership which is eating the very heart of our union and that the leadership in the anthracite is part of the leadership which now has all but smashed our union in the soft coal fields.

We must ask ourselves why is it that in the anthracite our officialdom has stopped fighting for the check-off, when we know that during the last strike of the anthracite workers they have made it one of the biggest issues. Why have they dropped it, also why have they specially dropped it on or before the Mt. Carmel fake cooperative conference?

CO-OPERATING WITH BOSS

Why did our officers join the Mt. Carmel conference with the coal operators, why did they holler so much about the grievances of the coal operators at the conference at the same time keeping quiet about the grievances of the mine workers?

We must also ask why so many grievances are going unsettled by the conciliation board and why it is that if the conciliation board takes them up they are settled in favor of the company or are disagreed on and thrown to the umpire where they are hardly ever heard of again.

Why is it that nothing is done to help the miners who are unemployed? At least 50 to 60 percent of the mine workers in the anthracite today are unemployed and have been unemployed since the spring of 1927. Unemployment is now becoming a permanent condition. Why is it that no definite rates are being set for the mechanical loader by the officialdom

in spite of the fact that it has taken the jobs of the mine workers away? No effort is being made to provide jobs for these miners who are being displaced by the mechanical loader.

Why is it that the officials are taking up the slogan of "putting out more coal" without saying anything about more pay? Especially why more coal if now the coal operators claim they have an over production?

Why is it that especially in District 1 where previously Cappellini made such a holler about the vicious contract system, now he is encouraging it and is not doing anything against it but is actually depending on the contractors to keep him in office?

Why is it that the conditions of the mines are getting worse, such as getting supplies, individual wage cuts, yardage and work. We know that while no definite wage cuts have been taking place openly, yet the bosses do and did cut the rates for individual miners until now you could not recognize the rates that are being paid as the rates which were agreed to on the rate sheet. Surely our district officials know about this.

"POOR COAL OPERATORS"

Now these are only a few of the burning issues, we bring to light so that there will not be any argument or doubt that we have grievances and that there is something wrong with our officials whom we pay. They rave about the terrible conditions of the poor coal operators but completely forget us.

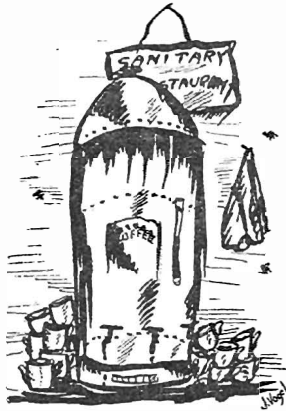
We can ask ourselves, will they remedy the above? We have seen what they have done so far and the conclusion is that instead of remedying them they have been going completely over to the bosses and are working hand in hand with the coal operators. At the same time they are actually encouraging the control of local unions and general grievance committees by the coal companies.

We, the rank and file must come to realize that the above mentioned conditions can only be remedied if we take definite action.

What action must we take? We must immediately build a leadership of our own from among us who today are working in the mines.

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home with lumbago. They were much worried over her and one said that she was going to see her that afternoon to give her back a good rub. This waitress turned to ask me if I was staying. When I said "No," that I was used to union conditions and couldn't stand such a job, all the girls wanted to know if they could join the union.



Inwardly ashamed and enraged because I could not answer "Of course," I hid my feeling and told the girls that mostly men belonged to our union now, but that we were planning an organization drive for girls and when it came off, if they were still at the trade, they would surely hear of it.

As I smiled good-bye to their brightened faces, I wondered what they would think if they knew the truth—that our union officials are not interested in the workers nor how they suffer on the job, whether non-union or union; that they would hesitate about taking in girls even if the boss brought a signed agreement.

But if I had told them all the ins and outs of our union's "business" policy, I would also have told them that we had in our union a left wing that is fighting this boss-cooperation system and that when the left wing wins out, as is inevitable, we will have a city-wide organization drive, and there will be no discrimination against girls, nor against buss-boys, either, nor cooks. And we won't stop organizing restaurants and lunch rooms, but will look after hotel, cafeteria and automat workers as well, and by keeping up with the progress of the times, we will save our international union despite its officials.

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We must immediately start a struggle in our local unions to clean out corruption by the company and to clean out company influence.

We, as the membership as a whole, must realize that the union in the soft coal is in danger as also the union in the anthracite and that it is due primarily to the fact that Lewis, Cappelini and Golden are the head of it.

We must also realize that the different opposition movements in the districts and tri-districts of the anthracite must consolidate on one common program and must fight as a unit instead of fighting separately as we are fighting today.

"OUT WITH LEWIS"

We must make certain opposition elements not only fight because they are "out" at the present time and they want "in" but because the rank and file wants to clean out the offices. Our program must be: Out with Lewis and his whole clique—Immediate withdrawal from the Mt. Carmel cooperative conference which is controlled by the bosses—Immediate adjusting of all grievances—Immediate doing away

with the conciliation board and the umpire—Immediate taking care of the unemployed by the industry and the state government by a fund created from the profits of the coal operators and administered by the local unions—Immediate setting up of definite rates and making provisions for mine workers who are displaced by the mechanical loader—Absolute doing away with the contract system—Re-establishing wages where individual wage cuts were given on yardage or dead work—Absolute guarantee of all supplies for miners and in case of the miners not getting supplies and having to go home, they and the laborers or the workers who are concerned, must be paid a full wage for the day—Equalization of wages for all mine workers who are earning below the wage \$6.50—Immediate increase of 20%.

This is the only way that we will be able to save our union. The main task is for every member of the mine workers unions to get interested in his union affairs and to attend meetings. In this way only, will we be able to save what is left of our union and build it into the powerful union that it once was.