

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 4, NO. 258.

NEW YORK, MONDAY, MARCH 14, 1904.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

“WHAT HAS FOLLOWED THE COAL STRIKE”—A LESSON IN ARBITRATION.

By DANIEL DE LEON

IN *The World's Work* for March there appears an article entitled, “What Has Followed the Coal Strike.” Its Author, Guy Warfield, claims it is a first-hand study, made in the guise of a non-union man, and while on a social footing with mine bosses, superintendents and operators, a claim that is borne out by the facts disclosed. While evidently written with a purpose favorable to the operators, as its advocacy of the return to the monthly pay day shows, the article is invaluable as an expose of the deceptions practiced by arbitration, and is, on that account, worthy of working class perusal.

“What Has Followed the Coal Strike” proves first, last, and all the time, that the only persons benefited by the arbitration resulting from that great industrial event were the operators. Under its operations they were enabled to increase the cost of coal \$75,000,000. By means of the conciliation board they are enabled to force the miners to aggression and provoke cases, the long-winded and final settlement of which redounds to their benefit. Under the decisions of the conciliation board, non-unionism is established. Under its rulings 500 union men out of a total of 3,000 have been refused re-employment in District No. 7 alone. Further, the right of discharge without consulting the union is maintained by the board. This permits of wholesale blacklisting. Finally, the board's methods enable old evils, such as dockage, to persist. All of which adds to the \$75,000,000, already recorded, still greater profits.

Under the decision of the coal strike arbitration commission, the miners were awarded an increase of 10 per cent., but this increase is offset in various direct and indirect ways. First, the companies increased the cost of rent and coal sold to employees. Secondly, they established a system by which the non-unionists were

permitted to monopolize the mine cars to the detriment of the unionists. Thirdly, the system of excessive dockage cut down the day’s pay all the way from 2 to 10 per cent. Fourthly, the increased price of commodities bought at the stores rose out of proportion to the increase in wages; so that, finally, the increase of 10 per cent. was actually a decrease.

The coal strike arbitration commission also awarded the nine-hour day. The result, in the language of Warfield, is that the miners find it longer than ten, so intensified has it become. Every privilege which made the ten-hour day tolerable have been abolished. Less than an hour’s work overtime is not paid for, so that employees who are forced to work almost an entire hour beyond the nine-hour day have no basis for a valid claim! The nine-hour day is a huge and damnable farce. Just as the wage increase is really a wage decrease, so is the decreased work-day really an increased one. Add to all of the foregoing, the fact that the anthracite coal strike cost the miners, according to Warfield, \$25,000,000 in lost wages, and it becomes shockingly clear that the anthracite arbitration is one of the greatest outrages ever perpetrated on the working class. The men responsible for it, from President Roosevelt down to John Mitchell, and the criminal gang of “Socialist” alias Social Democrats who supported him, are as a consequence, worthy of nothing but working class condemnation and ostracism. Every one of them should be made to feel that the working class resents such a scurvy trick, and intends to profit from the experience in capitalist, labor fakir and Social Democratic “honor” that it has bestowed.

“What Has Followed the Coal Strike” is a vindication of Revolutionary Socialism. It enforces the lesson oft-taught by the Socialist Labor Party, in accordance with which it has opposed the labor fakirs, a la Mitchell,—that with the economic and political powers in the control of the capitalist class, the awards of arbitration are impossible of impartial interpretation and enforcement. Without backing, either in the shop or from governmental authority, it is impossible for the working class to secure that to which it is entitled according to the awards of arbitration. It follows that the prime essential then is for the working class to secure control of the economic and political power, by means of combined union and political action on class-conscious lines, as advocated by the Socialist Labor Party.

With such control of economic and political power it will be possible for the working class to not only enforce the awards of arbitration, but, what is more,—since it would do away with arbitration itself—abolish the system of capitalism and emancipate the working class by establishing Socialism.

Workingmen, be not deceived by arbitration. It is a fraud, and all those who advocate it, whether Roosevelts, Mitchells, or the bogus Socialists, such as addressed the Lithographers' mass meeting on 10th inst.—Kitchelt and Spargo—are frauds and working class traitors only worthy of your execrations, never of your praises or your votes. Out on it and them!

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

Uploaded April 2007

slpns@slp.org