## Four Hundred Native Born American Mothers Wives and Daughters Tell Why They are Fighting for the Miners' Union in Northern West Virginia



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The non-union coal operators of Northern West Virginia have attempted to destroy the influence of the United Mine Workers of America by circulating through the press and otherwise the statements that officers of the miners union are continuing the strike for the purpose of serving their own selfish ends.

These statements of the coal operators are absolutely untrue.

We are the wives and mothers of coal miners who are on strike and we are assisting and encouraging our husbands and fathers and sons, who are on strike because we know that the United Mine Workers of America has made life better for us and will continue to do so.

Prior to the miners organization coming to Northern West Virginia, the Consolidation Coal Company and others practically controlled every phase of the miners' life in this community. These coal operators told us just how much wages they intended to pay. They compelled us to spend the earnings of the bread winner in the company store. On election day they told our people just how they should vote if they expected to work in the mines. This condition meant that we were little better than slaves and must jump at every whim of the coal operators and their hirelings.

Mine guards, made up of some of the worst characters in West Virginia, with guns strapped to their belts were employed by the coal operators to spy on the miners and their families, to report any attempts made to even meet and discuss the mining situation and also to report if any of us came to town to purchase any of the necessaries of life.

Then came the United Mine Workers of America. The wages of our husbands, sons and fathers immediately increased. Our standards of living were raised. We were made free men and women. We bought better furniture for our homes. Our earnings were spent in Fairmont or anywhere else we desired to make our purchases. We were no longer compelled to deal in the company store. The mine guards who were swashbuckling through the mining camps were eliminated. They were either driven from the mining camps entirely or were put to work in the mines where they were compelled to earn a decent living.

These are some of the main reasons why we are engaged in this terrific and bitter struggle for our union in Northern West Virginia. Then came 1924 and '25. The majority of the coal operators had again signed a wage contract with the United Mine Workers of America. Our men were getting good wages and we were happy and prosperous and living as God intended we should live. Then came another sad day in our lives. The coal operators who

signed the agreement with the union desired to treat the wage contract as a mere scrap of paper. Just as the Kaiser did with the men, women and children of Belgium.

THE CONTRACT ABROGATING COAL OPERATORS USHER-ED IN THE ONLY PROCESS OF STARVATION THAT ANYONE HAS TRIED TO MAKE EFFECTIVE IN WEST VIRGINIA. They shut down their mines. They sent superintendents, mine foremen and other petty bosses to our homes and told us if we would sign a petition asking the coal company to do away with the union and reduce our wages they would reopen the mines. The coal companies refused to extend us any credit. They demanded our people to go to work. They owned the mines and they said they would starve us into submission. This was the process of starvation of these coal operators who abrogated the wage agreement that brought us for the first time in our lives the happiness and freedom we were entitled to. This method of starvation did not bring the results anticipated.

WE WERE THEN SERVED WITH NOTICES THAT WE MUST VA-CATE OUR HOMES. MANY OF US HAD LIVED IN THESE HOMES TEN, TWENTY, THIRTY YEARS AND LONGER. WE HAD PAID OV-ER AND OVER AGAIN IN RENTS WHAT THESE PROPERTIES COST ORIGINALLY. EVERY PENNY THE CONSOLIDATION COAL COM-PANY AND OTHERS MADE, CAME FROM THE SWEAT AND THE BLOOD AND THE BONE OF OUR FATHERS, HUSBANDS AND SONS. NOTWITHSTANDING ALL THIS THESE COAL COMPANIES THROUGH THEIR ARMED MINE GUARDS AND THEIR ATTOR-NEYS AT LAW WHO LIVE IN MANSIONS AND POSE AS HONORA-BLE CHRISTIAN GENTLEMEN. WERE SUCCESSFUL IN HAVING US EVICTED FROM OUR HOMES IN THE COLDEST DAYS OF THOSE WINTERS OF 1924 AND 1925. WE WERE MOTHERS AND WIVES AND DAUGHTERS OF STRIKING COAL MINERS. MOTHERS AND WIVES AND DAUGHTERS OF MEN WHO HAD COURAGE AND THE MANHOOD AND PATRIOTISM TO FIGHT FOR THEIR RIGHTS AS AMERICANS HAVE ALWAYS FOUGHT. IT MADE US SHUDDER TO THINK THAT HERE IN AMERICA, IN THE LAND OF THE FREE AND THE HOME OF THE BRAVE, HERE IN FAIRMONT WHERE THE COAL OPERATORS HAVE, MANY OF THEM, WONDERFUL MANSIONS WITH TEN, TWENTY AYE FIFTY TIMES AS MANY

ROOMS AS OUR HUMBLE LITTLE COTTAGES IN THE MINING CAMPS AND YET WE WERE PENALIZED WITH OUR DEAR LITTLE CHILDREN, THROWN FROM OUR HOMES BECAUSE OUR HUSBANDS, FATHERS AND SONS WOULD NOT BECOME PARTIES TO ABROGATING THEIR WAGE AGREEMENT AND LEAVE THEIR UNION—THE UNITED MINE WORKERS OF AMERICA.

THOUGH WE WERE THROWN FROM OUR HOMES, WHICH WERE OWNED BY THE COAL COMPANIES, WE WERE NOT HOMELESS. THE UNITED MINE WORKERS OF AMERICA BUILT HOMES FOR US AND OUR LITTLE ONES. WHEN WE WERE DESERTED BY THESE COAL COMPANIES AND THROWN OUT UPON THE ROAD SIDE THE UNITED MINE WORKERS OF AMERICA WAS THERE TO SHELTER US AND OUR CHILDREN AND WE ARE NOW LIVING IN, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN OUR LIVES, ALTHOUGH OUR HUSBANDS AND FATHERS AND SONS MADE MILLIONS FOR THE COAL COMPANIES, HOMES THAT WE CAN NOW CALL OUR OWN BECAUSE THEY BELONG TO OUR UNION—THE UNITED MINE WORKERS OF AMERICA.

The union hasn't furnished us with all the necessities of life but it has taken care of us and our bread winners as soldiers upon the field of industrial battle, just about as well as our government took care of our boys upon the field of military battle. Our union has given us a home. It has fed and clothed us and our children. When we were sick it furnished us a doctor and during the hours of misfortune it has buried our dead.

Knowing these conditions as we do, feeling the cruel sting of the lash of oppression as administered by the coal operators of Northern West Virginia, is it any wonder that we are willing to continue to sacrifice and to go through trial and tribulation to preserve the only institution in this country that can and has protected us—the United Mine Workers of America.

WE THANK GOD FOR THE OPPORTUNITY AND PRIVILEGE AS WOMEN WHO HAVE GONE THROUGH THIS STRUGGLE FOR NEARLY THREE YEARS, OF CONTINUING THE FIGHT, NOT ONLY FOR OURSELVES BUT FOR OUR CHILDREN AND OUR CHILDRENS' CHILDREN. WE WILL NO MORE SACRIFICE OUR UNION.

## WHICH HAS DONE SO MUCH FOR US, THAN WE WILL SACRIFICE OUR CHURCH OR OUR COUNTRY.

These are the reasons we are fighting. These are the reasons we are sacrificing in this spirit.

We shall continue to keep the faith and travel on and we appeal to every man working in the mines of Northern West Virginia with their wives and children to join with us in this great struggle for industrial freedom. Where there is no industrial freedom there is no liberty.

AGAIN WE SAY THANK GOD FOR THE UNITED MINE WORK-ERS OF AMERICA.

## Yours sincerely,

Miss Minna Bartlett Mrs. C. F. Moore Mrs. Nellie Lake Mrs. W. B. Collins Mrs. L. W. Merriman Mrs. W. A. James Mrs. Frank Booth Mrs. George Banks Mrs. H. E. Wilfong Mrs. Anna Tucker Mrs. Harry Isnu Mrs. Kirk Kelley Mrs. Melving Louden Mrs. Jack Lynch Mrs. B. Love Mrs. Earnest Johnson Mrs. Bruce McTish Mrs. L. W. Burrough Mrs. D. I. Maxwell Mrs. L. H. Brooks Mrs. Asie Reed Miss Eulah St. Clair Miss Roxie St. Clair Mrs. Hazel Ketterman Mrs. Iva Bartlett Mrs. G. M. Hurst Mrs. Walter Fittro Mrs. Henry Quinn Mrs. J. S. Ketterman Miss May Riggs Mrs. Maude Bartlett Mrs. E. J. Conner Mrs. Dealey Watson Mrs. A. E. Harris Mrs. Dewey Kelley Mrs. Alice Payne Mrs. S. O. Kinsey Mrs. C. S. Withers Mrs. Dorris Moore Mrs. Cal Overfield Mrs. Thomas Larry Mrs. Forrest Davis Mrs. John Winans Mrs. George Sprout Miss Edna Harris Mrs. A. C. Taylor Mrs. S. A. Williams Mrs. W. S. Harris Mrs. Bonnie Maxwell Mrs. Luther Odell Mrs. Tom Moore Mrs. Ad Stull Mrs. George Washington Mrs. John Roy Mrs. Genevieve Britton Mrs. Earnest Male Mrs. Charley Mayers Mrs. Frank Moore Mrs. Alta Stipes Mrs. Dave Watkins Mrs. Ervin Tate Mrs. Plummer McCartney Mrs. Harold Hayes Miss Ada Gorley Mrs. Jacob Johnson Mrs. James Baltrip Mrs. Birdie Hawkins Mrs. J. W. Bowers Mrs. Sarah Kisner Mrs. Tonis Whitehair Mrs. Albert Woods Mrs. Pressley Baker Mrs. Georgia Saucer Mrs. C. Cleavenger Mrs. Cota Lake Mrs. Clem Watkins Mrs. A. B. Moore Mrs. Fletcher Newsome Mrs. Wilbert Phillips Mrs. Basil Bostic Mrs. Bruce Wyckoff Mrs. Bruce Whitehair Mrs. William Jenkins Mrs. Marion Stevens Mrs. Richard Long Mrs. Joe Lewis Mrs. Walter Good Mrs. Dave Williams Mrs. Tom Walton Mrs. Turner Parrish Mrs. Addie Watson Mrs. Walter Cuise Mrs. Fletcher Nunn Mrs. W. M. Davis Mrs. Lovie Bays Mrs. Margie Justice Miss Ethel Digman Mrs. Perry Jordan Mrs. E. W. Freeman Mrs. Audrey Phillips Mrs. John Phillips Mrs. Mollie Bowers Mrs. W. S. VanMeter Mrs. E. N. Tucker Mrs. D. B. Streets Miss Ethel Mayle Mrs. F. E. Hurst Mrs. Russell Bragg Mrs. R. E. Martin Mrs. J. L. Collins Mrs. C. E. Davis Miss Ella Bartlett Mrs. Richard Davis Miss Sarah Dadisman Mrs. W. Garrett Mrs. A. E. Cane Mrs. S. W. Lacy Miss Stella Sayre Mrs. Joe Tims
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Miss Edith Carrico.

Mothers, wives and daughters of coal miners who are striking members of the United Mine Workers of America.

Mrs. Edna Hall

Mrs. Dollie Schauffner

Mrs. V. Welkins
Mrs. 1 rea "Wilson
Mrs. Cliff White
Mrs. Cliff White
Mrs. Cliff White
Mrs. I sai Smith
Mrs. I sai Smith
Mrs. I sai Smith
Mrs. I E Harris
Mrs. J. E. Harris
Mrs. J. L. Slins
Mrs. J. L. Slins
Mrs. J. L. Willer
Mrs. J. J. Willer
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Miss Fast elle Westland
Miss Eventos J. Grobal Jun
Miss Eventos J. Grobal Jun
Miss Maria Martin
Miss Marga Franchischer Mrs. Margaret Lacky
Mrs. Lio Retracal Section 1
Liollie Congil;
Mrs. Levis Carriers
Mrs. Levis Carriers
Mrs. Liollina Hatris
Mrs. Musy Martin Min Course Curious Mothers, vives and daughters of coel miners who are surking members of the United Mine Workers