OFFICIAL CIRCULAR

United Mine Workers of America

OFFICERS AND MEMBERS,
ALL LOCAL UNIONS, U.M.W.A.,
DISTRICT NO. 14.

May 3, 1926

Dear Sirs and Brothers:

Some few days ago a letter signed by Wulff, President Southwestern Interstate Coal Operators' Association, and Johnson, Commissioner Southwestern Interstate Coal Operators' Association, was forwarded to International President Lewis and the Presidents of the three Southwest Districts. This communication was quite lengthy and in substance, asking for a modification of the existing wage schedules. You will find below a copy of communication in reply to same, which has the indorsement of the three districts.

Indianapolis, Ind., May 1, 1926.

"Mr. Geo. J. L. Wulff, President,
Mr. W.L.A. Johnson, General Commissioner,
Southwestern Interstate Coal Operators' Assn.,
Keith and Ferry Building, Kansas City, Mo.

Gentlemen:

This office is in receipt of your communication, dated April 23rd, addressed to Messrs. Walters, Balmyple, Helm and myself, requesting that consideration be given the proposition of modifying the existing wage schedules of the Southwestern Contract.

The conditions in the coal industry of which you complain largely exist in all other bituminous producing districts, including the non-union territory. Certain factors, more or less local in nature, have operated to the disadvantage of the industry in the Southwest. The demoralizing effect of such influences cannot be properly charged to the wage rates set forth in the Southwestern Agreement. It is obvious to the members of your Association that the United Mine Workers of America could not agree to a modification of the existing rates in the Southwest without agreeing to similar modifications in the wage structure throughout the entire United States. It is equally obvious that a general lowering of wage levels throughout the industry would not place the Southwestern Districts in any more advantageous position than they now occupy. As a matter of fact, Mr. W.L.A. Johnson, General Commissioner
of the Southwestern Interstate Coal Operators' Association, has
stated to the writer that what the Southwestern Interstate Coal
Operators' Association required was a wage reduction that would be
withheld from other operating interests under contract with the
organization in other fields. It is, of course, utterly impossible
for the organization to accede to any such program.

It is a grave question whether the agreement in the Southwest has
been carried out in good faith by the operators in general. Numerous
former members of the Southwestern Interstate Coal Operators' Associa-
tion have ruthlessly repudiated their contract obligations and
have expended large sums of money in an endeavor to establish a non-
union condition in the industry. Insofar as this office is advised
such action has never encountered the official displeasure of your
Association. No statement has ever been issued criticizing or con-
demning individual companies for their efforts to smash and destroy
the jointly negotiated contract. On the other hand, there have
been frequent charges that representatives of the Association were
secretly condoning the nefarious practice. As a result an atmos-
phere of opposition to the agreement has been created, and it has
been the popular practice to charge every ill and shortcoming of
the industry in the Southwest to the wage provisions of the joint
contract. In all fairness, gentlemen, I submit that this condition
is detrimental and prejudicial to the mutual interests of the con-
tracting parties.

It is the desire and purpose of the United Mine Workers of America,
Districts 14, 21 and 25 inclusive, to carry out the provisions of
the Interstate Agreement to the date of its expiration by limitation.
We are convinced that such a policy is meritorious, not alone be-
cause of the obligations of the agreement, which are equally bind-
ing upon both sides, but also because a wage reduction will not prove
beneficial or a remedy for the existing ills of the industry.

The United Mine Workers of America will be glad to have the full
co-operation of the officers and members of the Southwestern Inter-
state Coal Operators' Association in carrying out the existing agree-
ment for the period which it specifies.

Yours very truly,

John L. Lewis,
President."

We are also hereby advising you that beginning Saturday, May 1st, in
the interest of economy, two Board Members will be laid off con-
tinuously until work in our district improves; each Board Member
taking his share of the idleness. Your grievances will be handled
just as promptly as possible under the conditions. We are giving
you this information so that if we are a day or two late in answer-
ing your call, you will understand why.

With best wishes, we are

Fraternally yours,

M.L. WALTERS, President
DAN O'DONNELL, Vice Pres.
HARRY W. BURR, Secy-Treas.