

been working because Report of Investigation  
Of Need for Relief Work in West Virginia.  
the union miner, and therefore operators may market their coal

at a lower rate. The union miners to the north had signed an agree-  
ment with the operators on March 31, 1920 establishing a scale of wages  
As commissioned by the American Friends Service Committee,  
the undersigned spent one week, March 29 - April 5, 1922 in the  
to continue until March 31, 1922. However, the operators claimed that  
coal fields of West Virginia, investigating the need for relief  
they were unable to operate their mines at a profit at this wage rate  
among the families of unemployed mine workers, and the possibility  
and offered the men the old 1917 scale. Attorney General Daugherty  
of pouring oil over the troubled waters of industrial war by  
made the statement that the 1920-22 wage agreement was one to which  
means of Friends' service rendered in the name of universal  
the Government was a party, and was legally binding. However, the  
good-will. We visited all parties to the mine conflict in West  
operators claiming inability to make profits, closed their mines,  
Virginia. - We consulted the State Commissioner of Labor, opera-  
Union officials agree that it was almost impossible for the operators  
tors, unions and individual mine workers. We obtained contacts  
to make profits under conditions which existed last year.  
with all the relief agencies at present known to be working in  
The miners therefore have refused all work in coal mines unless  
the field. Finally, we personally inspected a number of mining  
paid according to the scale established by them, by the operators and  
camps in the districts suffering the greatest destitution. The  
by the government. In consequence they have remained idle about nine  
following is a brief summary of the results of this investigation:  
of the last twelve months. They have, however, been anxious to work at  
any other job at no matter what wage.

**ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF THE WEST VIRGINIA RELIEF  
PROBLEM.**

The Any problem of relief in West Virginia is inextricably  
scale interwoven with the economic situation. Therefore, our report  
any broad can be fully understood only after a short review of the condi-  
remain tions which caused the need of relief.  
supported by The strike has caused no ripple on the industrial sur-  
face of West Virginia. The State's coal mines are divided up  
a legal into two classes: the union mines to the north and center; and  
they have the non-union mines to the south. For practically one year  
working the union mines to the north and center have been idle. They  
the straver aged three months work in the entire year. The mines were  
It seem closed before the strike; and remained after the strike.  
by women and In the south, the non-union miners have been working  
of the all year, and continued working after the strike. They have

been working because they are willing to accept a wage much lower than the union miner, and therefore their operators may market their coal at a lower rate. The union miners to the north had signed an agree-

ment with the operators on March 31, 1920 establishing a scale of wages to continue until March 31, 1922. However, the operators claimed that

they were unable to operate their mines at a profit at this wage rate, and offered the men the old 1917 scale. Attorney General Daugherty made the statement that the 1920-22 wage agreement was one to which the Government was a party, and was legally binding. However, the operators' claiming inability to make profits, closed their mines.

Union officials agree that it was almost impossible for the operators to make profits under conditions which existed last year.

The miners therefore have refused all work in coal mines unless paid according to the scale established by them, by the operators and

by the government. In consequence they have remained idle about nine of the last twelve months. They have, however, been anxious to work at any other job at no matter what wage.

The operators claim that the miners could have work at 1917 scale if they chose. They, therefore, oppose our entering the field in any broad sense, on the grounds that it would encourage the miners to remain idle. They say that the miners will never return to work, if supported by public charity.

On the other hand it should be noted that since the miners had a legal agreement with the operators for a certain wage scale, that they had every right to stick out for that scale. Since they were not working before the strike, conditions have not materially changed since the strike. For they would not have been working strike or no strike. It seems therefore, that we may conclude that where relief is needed by women and children, that we may proceed to administer it, regardless of the strike. In the final analysis, the women and children are not

The above facts cover only the briefest possible summary of the problem, responsible for the fact that their husbands and fathers are coal miners, any more than the German children were responsible for the fact that their fathers were our enemies.

Another point which seems essential. One cannot visit West Virginia without being struck by the fact that the present trouble is due to the fact that there are in the coal industry, too many mines and too many miners. It is estimated that our active mines are now capable of producing 40% more coal than the country needs or can export to foreign countries; and that we have at these surplus mines 150,000 extra miners who are eating into the net wages and cutting down the hours of work of their brother miners. This is essentially the trouble with the coal industry. There will always be trouble in it, until this condition is changed.

Although there were many reasons for calling the strike, this over production was the primary one. The strike was called for the purpose of clubbing out of the industry the mines which were not located close to centers of transportation, or close to the big industrial centers or which had their coal in unremunerative geological formation. With the closing of these surplus mines, the surplus miners will be out of work. Few of them realize this. Few of them have the initiative to pack up their families and move even if they did realize it. They are a primitive stock of people, native-born American mountaineers, many of them having been here since Revolutionary days, but having remained ignorant and isolated in their mountain gulches. They know only how to wield a pick, a wheelbarrow and a rifle. They will be forced out of the industry only with the greatest difficulty.

It is well to bear in mind that relief among these miners has one danger. It may encourage them to remain on at an industry which they must eventually leave. It may be only postponing the day of moving for them.

The above facts cover only the briefest possible summary of the situation. Because the problem is so intricate and so important, we recommend that the American Friends Service Committee use its influence in urging the various Friends meetings with whom we are closely associated to examine into the situation thoroughly. We believe that only by an arousing of public opinion and a thorough understanding of the facts, can this problem, more important to industry than any other in the country, be solved. The present strike may be ended in a compromise, but the trouble will recur again unless the public is awakened to the need of a permanent solution. We as Friends can help in this/

#### THE EXTENT AND LOCATION OF THE NEED.

We were satisfied by our investigations, that there is widespread destitution, and much need of relief, among the families of the miners. Their only hope is to meet the most acute destitution.

The nearest estimate which we were able to obtain as to the total extent of need in the state was made about two months ago, by the Miners' Relief Fund. In making their survey at that time, they estimated that approximately 28,000 families were dependent upon charity, with an average of three children to the family. According to this estimate, the total number of children dependent upon charity was about 75,000. As the duration of the unemployment has increased since that time, the extent of destitution has increased accordingly. A new survey of the need will probably be made in the near future by the local union officials.

We were surprised to discover that this need is not located to any important degree in Logan and Mingo Counties, which have received so much publicity in the North. These miners in these counties are either non-union, and so have been working, or else have been living in the tent colonies, and receiving aid from the international

union organization. Though living under hard conditions, the tent colonies have thus far managed to get along.

The main need is found in the union areas where unemployment has prevailed. These areas are located around three principle centers; 1, around Charleston, in upper Kanawha County; 2, around Beckley, in Raleigh and Fayette Counties; and 3, around Grafton.

**RELIEF AGENCIES AT WORK.**

Several relief agencies are at work. In the first place there is the union organization. This endeavors to give relief to its destitute members as far as possible, but the prevalence and continuance of unemployment have practically exhausted its resources,

and it is unable to meet the need. The union officials declare that it will be impossible for them to issue regular strike dues, as would have normally been done since their entrance into the national strike. Their only hope is to meet the most acute destitution.

More substantial aid is being obtained by the Miners' Relief Fund. This is an unofficial organization which grew out of a Christmas fund, raised by the editor of the Charleston, W. Va. labor paper, for the benefit of the children in the tent colonies in Mingo County.

It has appealed to labor forces throughout the country. For several months past, it has received an average of from four to five hundred

dollars a week. Recently its receipts have decreased, while the demands for help continue to grow more numerous. In a statement dated April 5, the treasurer of this fund says: "During the past two weeks we have been able to respond to only about 10% of the calls made upon

us owing to the utter lack of funds. We have a great number of appeals for help each day" / It is probable that this relief agency will be officially taken over by the unions in the near future, but apparently that change will not render it more competent to meet the demands made upon it. Though it has rendered some relief in all the needy fields of

the state, lack of funds have forced it to work mainly in the fields around Charleston.

The only other relief organization at work in the field is the West Virginia Miners Relief Committee, which has been formed by sympathizers in Baltimore. It is under no official auspices, comprising all Baltimoreans who are interested in sending relief to the miners. Its appeal literature is signed by the Archbishop of Baltimore, the Rabbi of Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, the Rector of Old St. Pauls, and by several labor leaders. It takes a definite stand on the industrial issue, heading its literature: "Shall Unionism Be Starved To Death". It is to be addressed under the name of Elisabeth Gilman, Treas., 513 Park Ave., Baltimore, Md. Up to the present, this committee has raised about \$2500 in relief funds, most of which was sent to the field in the form of a car-load of staple food products. It distributes directly through the local unions, and has confined its work to Raleigh and Fayette Counties, making its center the union offices of District 29 at Beckley. This committee hopes to send another car of food, but has not yet succeeded in obtaining funds to do so. A social worker whom we met at Hansford, in Kanawha

County. The Red Cross and other local charity organizations, after formulating plans for Miners' relief work some months ago, soon took a definitely partizan stand on the side of the operators, and withdrew from the field entirely. District Red Cross officials stated their grounds as follows: 'The miners could have worked if they would have accepted the 1917 scale, and the other conditions offered by the operators. Since they refused to accept work which was offered them, to feed them through public charity would be to encourage them in idleness. Relief work is unadvisable, except in the case of a selected case of widows and other cases not directly involved in the industrial struggle'. The miners are particular resentful because of the Red Cross stand, since they themselves contributed largely to its funds when they had work. The Red Cross officials said that they were now giving up relief to even their approved list because they had no more funds. They offered to turn this list over to us, if we wished to have it.

The social worker mentioned WHAT IS NEEDED? indicated an epidemic of

1 - Food. The fundamental need is for food. It should be understood that this need does not in any sense compare with such conditions as those reported in Russia. There is no famine. The relief agencies named above, though they are not able to properly feed the destitute population, are at present preventing actual starvation. There is, however, increasing lack of food, and increasing undernourishment. The latter strikes particularly hard upon the children, who are forced to live upon beans, corn-meal, flour and occasional bacon, which is all that the present relief agencies can supply. In most cases they have no milk, and no light cereals. At the same time, even the coarse food, which the present relief organizations are supplying, is not being provided in sufficient quantities to meet the need, as indicated under another heading. There is, therefore, need of even coarse foods for adults. The tent colonies near Beckley which are receiving aid from

the Baltimore committee, are living on two short meals a day. Families which had no food whatever for the next day were reported to us.

WHAT COULD FRIENDS DO ?

2. Clothing. There is also a need of clothing. Many of the women and children are in rags. We were told that many children had been unable to attend school last winter because they did not have decent clothes to wear.

3. - Seeds. In some of the camps, the miners are able to raise gardens which would help to supply them with food later in the summer. Many of those who might have gardens have no seed to plant. A social worker whom we met at Hansford, in Kanawha County, has been trying to get seeds for the near-by communities. She said that onion sets, potatoes, beans, lettuce, beets, and corn, could be used to advantage.

Since returning to Philadelphia, we have received the following telegram from this worker:

Miners here given permission to plan garden. I can reach five hundred families can buy seeds glad to distribute for you send supplies directly Gladys Winfield, Hansford, W.Va. them

4. - Medical Aid. We found a surprising lack of sickness. The social worker mentioned above predicted an epidemic of scurvy in her district if present conditions continue, but so far we found no general sickness. There are, however, in nearly every camp, one or two cases of sickness which are not receiving medical attention because of lack of funds. We found several such cases of consumption. One consumptive woman, Anna Crawford, Dry Branch, P.O., appealed to us particularly for aid, as she said she felt that without medical attention, she would not live to see grow up the sisters' child which she is raising. It would

cost one dollar a day to send her to the state hospital, where she would receive proper care.

WHAT COULD FRIENDS DO ?

It must be said at once that, though Friends might undertake relief measures in a spirit of perfect good-will and without partizanship, such measures will still be working against the operators. The latter are using hunger as an economic weapon with which to carry on their fight for lower wages and the break-up of unionism. To relieve hunger is, therefore, to oppose their aims. Furthermore, no relief work can be done without making some arrangements with the unions; for since union organizations are already doing what they can in the field, any work we might do would have to be co-ordinated with their work to avoid duplication.

Roughly outlined, possible measures for immediate relief work are as follows:

- 1 - The most logical and efficient method of work would seem to us to be that adopted by the Baltimore committee - to send supplies directly to the union committees, and have them distributed under our supervision. In order to do this, we would have to rise entirely above the industrial issue, and relieve human suffering without regard to which side we ourselves, or any others, may take in that issue. We would have to be clear that it is not right to force hunger <sup>upon</sup> and women and children in any cause, and that it is right to relieve that hunger under any honest circumstances. Should we work through the union committees, we might send a car-load of food to either Charleston or Grafton - or one to each if we were able - and then send one worker to the field to visit the communities in which the food was distributed, an order that the Service Committee



would know that it was being properly used. As far as our observations went, the union committees are distributing relief fairly, carefully and wisely. In this or any other case, if we sent a worker to the field, he might distribute seeds, and any clothing that there was; and provide the means of medical attention to the scattered cases that need it.

2 - Friends might arrange with the Miners' Relief Fund to take over a certain limited territory in which they could have entire charge, either of all relief work, or of child feeding. The Miners' Relief Fund expressed its entire willingness to turn over such a district to us, wherever, and in whatever size we wanted it. We might take two or three camps, with perhaps a hundred families needing help, or as large a section as an entire creek valley, with thirty or more camps and a thousand families in need. A section of this kind, which appealed to us as an excellent field, is the Cabin Creek valley in upper Kanawha County, about twenty miles from Charleston. It has branch railroad connections with the main line of the C & O, contains about thirty camps, each of which averages about thirty families in need.

The advantage of this plan would be complete administration by Friends. Distribution would probably have to be through the local union relief committees, but a central Friends' commissary could be established to which they could apply for food. If the cooperation of the men were used, it would seem that one worker could administer such a commissary.

Under either of the above arrangements, we might specialize in child feeding. As a basis for discussion, we make the following rough estimate: Supposing that the Committee had two thousand

ignorant and unenlightened. The conditions under which they are forced to live give them nothing to live for. They cannot acquire freight, maintenance of a worker if one is absent, etc., and that their own homes, and are never sure that they will not be evicted with this amount it was desired to work out a program of child-feeding on a two months basis. A daily ration of a dish of oatmeal pleasant for the most part, and always to some extent dangerous, and a cup of cocoa, with milk and sugar for each, could be supplied. These conditions force them to live from hand to mouth, and for at a food cost of about fifty-five cents per child per week. Two thousand dollars would supply this ration to four hundred children for two months.

Most of the men above thirty years of age, went to work when they were young boys, and cannot even read and write. Most of them also have no sense of sanitation or of how to live. In one need its termination will have. If a large majority of the men camp which we visited, the social worker referred to above had been go to work immediately after its close, the emergency will probably cease. The worst need is now, and from the standpoint of service alone, it seems that we could do the most good by giving not clean this trash from their own yards. They said that it was as much aid as we can, as quickly as we can. It may be that in a month the crisis will be past. The same two thousand dollars if freed for immediate child-feeding through the Miners' Relief Fund, would take the same rations food as an occasional supplementary diet to perhaps 1500 children.

It is also worth considering whether or not, if the Committee could see its way clear on the underlying principles, a special appeal might not be made for funds. It is possible that such an appeal might produce returns beyond our present financial possibilities intelligently at present.

#### THE OPPORTUNITY FOR PERMANENT WORK.

Nor would the effect of such work be limited to its actual accomplishments in the mining camps. Workers who entered it, would, we believe put the healing leaven of good-will to work in the fabric of industrial relations. They could influence the operators toward a more sympathetic outlook toward the human communities under their care; actually at present in their mastery. Their are

ignorant and unenlightened. The conditions under which they are forced to live give them nothing to live for. They cannot acquire their own homes, and are never sure that they will not be evicted from the company's houses. Their work is intermitent, hard, unpleasant for the most part, and always to some extent dangerous. These conditions force them to live from hand to mouth, and for some semblance of the satisfactions of life, they are practically driven to superficial pleasures.

Most of the men above thirty years of age, went to work when they were young boys, and cannot even read and write. Most of them also have no sense of sanitation or of how to live. In one camp which we visited, the social worker referred to above had been trying to get them to clean up the tin cans and litter in their yards. Though they had been idle for a year, many of them would not clean this trash from their own yards. They said that it was the company's business, and they did not propose to do it. Most of the few social and educational workers in the field are paid ~~for~~ by the operators, and are regarded with suspicion by the men. Service workers who would go among them, living with them and for them, could help them to higher standards. Night schools could be established to give them the elements of education. Their interest in sanitation and cleanliness could be developed. The women could be taught to sew and to cook - neither of which they are able to do intelligently at present.

Nor would the effect of such work be limited to its actual accomplishments in the mining camps. Workers who entered it, would, we believe put the healing leaven of good-will to work in the torn fabric of industrial relations. They could influence the operators toward a more sympathetic outlook toward the human communities under their care; actually at present in their mastery. Their

experience with human side of ~~life~~ the industrial conflict would give them an appealing vantage point from which to interest others in the study of industrial problems. It is quite possible that the results of such a venture might react as powerfully on industrial relations, as our reconstruction and relief work in Europe has reacted upon international relations - standing as a symbol of the new spirit which would bring new vision and hope to circles far beyond the reach of even our imagination at present.

As commissioned by the American Friends of the West Virginia Relief, the undersigned spent one week, March 20-27, 1920, in the coal fields of West Virginia, investigating the relief among the families of unemployed mine workers. The possibility of pouring oil over the troubled waters of industrial war by means of Friends' service rendered in the name of universal good-will. We visited all parties to the mine conflict in West Virginia. - We consulted the State Commissioner of Labor, operators, unions and individual mine workers. We obtained contacts with all the relief agencies at present known to be working in the field. Finally, we personally inspected a number of mining camps in the districts suffering the greatest destitution. The following is a brief summary of the results of this investigation:

W.A.  
D.P.

#### ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF THE WEST VIRGINIA RELIEF PROBLEM.

Any problem of relief in West Virginia is inextricably interwoven with the economic situation. Therefore, our report can be fully understood only after a short review of the conditions which caused the need of relief. The strike has caused no ripple on the industrial surface of West Virginia. The State's coal mines are divided up into two classes: the union mines to the north and center; and the non-union mines to the south. For practically one year the union mines to the north and center have been idle. They have averaged three months work in the entire year. The mines were closed before the strike; and remained after the strike. In the south, the non-union miners have been working of the all year, and continued working after the strike. They have