

United Mine Workers of America
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For Immediate Release

Washington, D. C., May 19¹⁹⁴⁸ — Thomas Kennedy, vice president of the United Mine Workers of America, today issued the following statement;

"The United Mine Workers of America is anxious and willing to negotiate a new wage agreement with the bituminous coal industry. The UMWA did not walk out of the preliminary joint conference.

"The Southern Coal Producers Association once again has wrecked efforts of the UMWA and a majority of the bituminous coal operators and producers to bargain in good faith. The Southern Coal Producers Association was not a party to the 1947 National Bituminous Wage Agreement. As an organization, the Southern Coal Producers Association has no more right to participate in a joint conference of the UMWA and the coal industry than would the National Association of Manufacturers or the U. S. Chamber of Commerce.

"The UMWA is perfectly willing now, and always has been willing to meet with the actual producers of Southern coal, their associations which signed the 1947 agreement and any representative they certify as their collective bargaining agent.

"We are willing to meet with Mr. Joseph E. Moody if he is chosen by the Southern operators and associations who signed the 1947 agreement to be their collective bargaining agent. We told the operators, and we now reiterate, that we have nothing personal against Mr. Moody.

"But when the Southern Coal Producers Association, a paper organization and a holding company and propaganda organization, claims a seat at the joint conference, it is guilty of the same obstructionist tactics used in the past to confuse the issue.

"Let me repeat, the UMWA will meet with Mr. Moody, or anyone else chosen by the signatories to the 1947 agreement. We cannot meet with Mr. Moody as president of the Southern Coal Producers Association because the association has no business in our conference and was not a signatory to the 1947 contract.

"The Southern Coal Producers Association, as Mr. H. K. Cook, himself an operator, today pointed out, has an ulterior motive in these harassing maneuvers. The association wants to force a lowered wage scale on Southern coal miners.

"The Southern Coal Producers Association knows perfectly well that the procedure of joint wage conferences requires unanimous decisions by the operators

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and the UMWA. The association knows that if it had a seat in the conference it could stall, block and eventually wreck the conference by its veto power. This is analagous to the procedure in the security council of the United Nations. The American people well know how the veto has been used in that council to block constructive work.

"I would like to point out that the UMWA, itself, proposed the seating of the coal operators and associations representing 269,000,000 annual tons of coal production - more than a majority. This would enable us to get on with the conference which actually has not yet started. This is evidence of the attitude of good faith and fair play on our part. I wish to repeat that a minority group succeeded in breaking up the conference before it got underway.

"To the coal operators of America, the UMWA says again: Gentlemen, the responsibility is yours. We want to get down to business."

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