

Speed-Up and Mechanization Show Need for Organization

By WM. Z. FOSTER.

IN ACCORDANCE with the decision of the recent session of the National Committee of the Trade Union Unity League to have meetings called of all the leading committees of the respective national unions and leagues in order to survey their work and to lay out new programs, the National Executive Boards of the Mine, Oil, and Smelter Workers Industrial Union and the Metal Workers Industrial League met in Pittsburgh, Pa., Dec. 26-29. These board meetings were highly successful, showing a healthy condition in the metal and mining unions, despite the great difficulties they are encountering.

In both boards a careful analysis was made of the economic situation in their respective industries. In both industries there was evidenced a widespread unemployment, and an orgy of wage cutting and speed-up.

In other articles I have written about the unemployment and wage cuts in these industries. Here I shall dwell only a moment on the terrific speed-up. Delegates from metal and coal districts reported great rationalization propositions on all sides.

It was stated that 500,000,000 is being spent to modernize the steel industry, of which \$225,000,000 by U. S.

Steel. This carries with it a great intensification of production. The old Byers plant in Pittsburgh, which formerly produced 4000 tons, it was said, now turns out 60,000 tons, with the same forces. In a U. S. Steel Co. tube mill a new furnace does the work of 750 men with 90. A delegate reported that in the mill where he works 104 workers in one department have been supplanted by machines operated by two men.

In the coal industry rationalization also goes ahead. The Illinois mines are widely mechanized. For example, the Orient mine, which formerly employed 2000 workers, now has only 800 and turns out even more coal, the Illinois delegates said. In mines and steel mills workers were reported as actually collapsing from exhaustion. Rank and file "go slow" movements are developing.

Incorrect Use of Partial Demands.

The Board meetings critically examined the reasons why they have not made greater progress notwithstanding the evidently increasing radicalization of the workers. In both instances it was recognized that this was largely due to an incorrect use of partial demands; that it is the common tendency of T. U. U. L. unions to rely too much upon general slogans and not enough

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TERRIFIC SPEED-UP AND MECHANIZATION SHOW NEED TO ORGANIZE

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upon questions touching more immediately and urgently the workers' lives.

An excellent discussion was had on this subject. Both unions worked out practical programs of demands and unquestionably their activities. In this respect will undergo a fundamental improvement from now on. The question of strike strategy, in the light of the experiences in the metal and coal industries especially, was likewise thoroughly discussed.

The 6-hour day for the steel industry was advocated by many delegates.

In a true spirit of self-criticism, the executives of the two unions admitted that they had neglected the work among the unemployed. A step towards improvement in this matter was the issuance of a joint call for struggle against mass starvation of the unemployed and the working out of campaigns among the jobless. Also weaknesses in the work in the old unions (especially in the Machinists Union and in the U. M. W. A. in the anthracite) came in for much criticism and were the subjects of plans for improvement. The Howat movement particularly looms a menace in the mining industry.

Workers Club Endorses N. W. I. L.
An important incident in the meeting of the Metal Workers Board was a statement by the head of the Russian Mutual Aid Society that his organization, which contains 1000 steel workers, has endorsed the M. W. I. L. and will try to get its steel worker members to join that body. It was a dramatic illustration of the importance of close relations with workers' fraternal orders in the building of the revolutionary unions.

The meetings displayed a greater internationalism than ever before. The reports on the 5th R. I. L. U. Congress and the conferences of the Metal Workers and Miners I. P. C.'s were the basis of the whole discussion. Also the role of the T. U. U. L. as the national revolutionary union center was more clearly emphasized. All this was a sharp manifestation of the rapidly growing maturity of our leadership in both these industries.

The two boards, besides thoroughly discussing policy questions, devoted close attention to matters of organization. The financial and dues systems of both unions were radically overhauled, especially that of the miners, where the former demoralizing wholesale credit system was abolished and a new dues plan instituted. Steps were also taken to strengthen the unions' official organs, "The Metal Worker" and "The Mine Worker". "Labor Unity" was praised as having become much more readable in the past few months and efforts will be made to extend its circulation.

Much discussion was had upon the question of the badly neglected work among the youth, the Negroes, and the women workers. The increasing role of these groups in both industries and the very evident attempts of the bosses to split them away from the main body of the workers made manifest to the meetings that our work among them must be radically improved as quickly as possible.

Principle of Concentration.

The principle of concentration came in for concrete application. The Metal Workers, breaking with their old time orientation on the lighter sections of the industry, now center definitely in steel. They made their major concentration upon Pittsburgh and Youngstown, with lesser concentration at Detroit and Chicago. The T. U. U. L. representative announced that the T. U. U. L. National Committee considered the organization of the metal industry as its major task and had delegated Comrade Schmies to help in the work, to be assigned to the automobile section. The miners concentrated their main forces upon Western Pennsylvania and Ohio, with lesser concentration in West Virginia, Illinois and the anthracite. It was made very clear that such concentration does not mean the abandonment of work at the less strategic points. Here the work will go forward as best as possible with local forces and such help as the centers can give.

To intensify the work of organization the Metal Workers will hold a series of district conferences, leading up to a national convention. This convention, which will launch the Metal Workers' Industrial Union, will take place in the days just prior to the T. U. U. L. national convention this Fall.

The miners also provided for a series of district conventions. These like those of the metal workers, will develop local programs of struggle strengthen the dues system, elaborate corps of volunteer organizers, develop rank and file organizing campaigns, build the respective union papers, and generally begin the adoption of the news methods of work stressed by the R.I.L.U. and the T.U.U.L. National Committee. The Metal Workers established a fund to organize the steel workers and the miners, finding

United Front Conference, Jan. 18 at 2 p. m., in Slovack Hall, 52 West St.
STAMFORD, Conn. — United Front Unemployment Conference, Jan. 26.
INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. — State Unemployment Conference and hunger march on state capitol, Feb. 1 and 2.
WHEELING, W. Va. — United Front Conference, Feb. 1, at 2 p. m., at Masonic Temple, 1407 Market St.
LOS ANGELES — Second United Front Conference, Jan. 15.
SOUTH BEND, Ind. — United Front Conference, Jan. 18, 2 p. m., at Workers Home, 1216 West Colfax St.
ST. PAUL, Minn. — Hunger march in St. Paul and Minneapolis and demonstration before state capitol, Jan. 7. Simultaneous demonstrations in Duluth and other towns.
The Campaign Committees in many towns have not sent in the announcement of their meetings and hunger marches. They should do so at the earliest possible date.

Boss Rags Try Hide Bank Crashes

(By a Worker Correspondent.)

PHILADELPHIA. — Exactly seven days elapsed and the safest, sanest and most sober industrious and extraordinarily financial center in the United States witnesses three bank failures of major proportions.

The most recent of that of the Aldine Trust Co. and its two branches involve over \$9,000,000. One of its branches at 40th St. and Lancaster Avenue is in a purely proletarian neighborhood and the sufferers who cannot get their money are nearly all workers.

Directors Lie.

"The bank is solvent" declared the rich directors of the bank. Maybe so, but the bank remains closed.

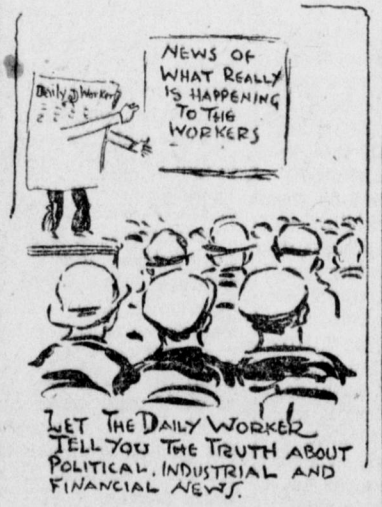
Ten thousand dollars' reward was offered for "malicious rumor mongers." This reward is the usual theatrical gesture and the idea that the great "solvent" Aldine Trust Co.

the present name of their union unpopular and a hindrance to the work, submitted to the affiliated locals for decision three proposed changes of name.

Altogether the board meetings were very successful. Although the national officials and field organizers are impoverished to the point of actual hunger, they are exhibiting an inspiring optimism and enthusiasm. They see the opportunities of the situation rather than its many difficulties. Their courageous outlook is a true reflection of the new fighting spirit of the masses. Nationally and locally the leadership of both unions is being gradually strengthened by the development and drawing in of new forces. In this respect the youth have a very vital role to play.

Although both our Miners and Metal Workers Unions are undergoing severe hardships at the present time we can look forward with confidence to their growth and development. Great struggles lie immediately ahead in both the coal and metal industries. And in these impending class battles our T.U.U.L. unions of miners and steel workers will grow and flourish.

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section give Comrade Nieminski full co-operation in the work and that all connections will be visited for the Daily Worker. We will also appoint a Daily Worker Correspondent and you will soon receive articles in regard to the conditions and activities in Erie and vicinity."

NO MORE XMAS TREES; SENDS MONEY TO DAILY.

"Enclosed you will find one dollar", writes a young pioneer from the Bronx. "My father this year did not get a Christmas tree because he understands that all that is bluff and nothing else. The two dollars we were going to give for the christmas tree we are sending to the 'Daily Worker' and to the Greek 'Impros'. I hope all the children will do the same thing."

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