

## TOO MANY LABOR OFFICIALS

As a preliminary and immediate step, and also an effective one, towards the reduction in the number of trade union bureaucrats, we should consider and spread the idea of reducing the number of useless offices and officials in our local unions, lodges and divisions.

To use the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers as an example: The local unions are called "Divisions" and have the following offices and officials which, in my opinion, are not only useless and unnecessary, but decidedly detrimental, namely: Chief Engineer, Second Engineer, Guide and Chaplain.

These officials render the Divisions no special service. Their part played in the useless ritualistic ceremony at the opening and closing of meetings has a most stultifying effect on the membership.

### Breeding Bureaucracy

However, the most serious objection to having an organization honeycombed with useless officials is that it breeds bureaucracy and corruption in the union. The B. of L. E. furnishes a glaring example of this. In this case the local officials often become the tools of the Grand Officers in misleading and defrauding the membership. This was especially the case in my local Division 369 where the local officials became the active agents of the Grand Office in selling worthless stock, real estate and fake "Loyalty" Bonds to the members and to framed-up and to expel any member who objected to this wholesale robbery of the B. of L. E.

With the aid and support of the salaried General Officials, these local office holders form a combination or political machine to get themselves reelected year after year. This office-holding develops a craving for personal benefit at the expense of the rank and file, a desire to get on the payroll.

All the elected officials that are needed in a Division of the B. of L. E. are a Secretary-Treasurer, a Grievance man and a delegate to the National Convention. The Chairman (called the Chief Engineer) should be elected for each meeting. This would promote democracy and intelligence among the members. In Division 369 of the B. of L. E. the local bureaucrats headed by J. F. Collins, are running and controlling the Division as if it was their personal property. Through machine control and bull-dozing tactics, the Chief Engineer and Secretary-Treasurer have had themselves reelected to office for the last quarter of a century. A lot of useless officials breed such conditions.

### Prepare for Convention

The thing to do is for the local union (lodges or divisions) to introduce amendments at the forthcoming convention to eliminate all the useless officials, big and small.

The labor constitutions should also be amended to provide for salaried officials to be automatically drafted back on the job after a certain number of terms in office. Trade unionists should discuss this and let themselves be heard also through the columns of the Militant.

C. R. HEDLUND

## Long Hours in Steel Mills

Long hours are still the curse of the steel industry. The popular assumption that Pres. Harding induced the late Judge Gary, out of the goodness of his heart, to abolish the 12-hour day, and that therefore steel mills are now operating on the 8-hour shift, is knocked into a cocked hat by figures just released by the Federal Council of Churches, through its research department.

### More than Half Work over 48 Hours

Actually but 46.6% of 250,000 steel workers covered by the report are working the 8-hour day. Nearly as high a percentage are working 10 hours while 6.7% are on the 12-hour schedule. More than a quarter of the steel workers studied are working 7 days a week, a half are on the 6-day basis and only 20% work five to five and one half days.

This by no means tells the story however. The figures for the 11 and 12-hour shifts and the 7-day week are minimum figures, the investigators reported, because plant managers often "color" their figures for the benefit of public opinion.

# The New Bedford Textile Workers Unite to Aid Jobless and Stalinist "Politics"

(Continued from Page 1)

The unemployment condition in New Bedford is becoming more acute daily. While half of the 30,000 textile workers were jobless several weeks ago, at present about 20,000 are unemployed. It is difficult to state accurately the exact amount of workers who are without work. Half of the mills are closed while many of the others are running only several days a week. Those that are closed include the Acushnet mill and the City Mill. The Dartmouth mill is running two days a week. According to old time textile workers the unemployment situation is worse than it has been in 15 years.

Taking advantage of the scarcity of work, the mill owners are reducing wages and installing methods to further speed up the workers. The workers resent these actions on the part of the employers and are talking of another general strike.

In fact, several weeks ago, when the mills in the South End cut wages of the weavers and added more looms they went on strike. The strike lasted for a few days but the weavers went back to work with the cut in pay and speed-up conditions. The National Textile Workers Union which was conducting the strike apparently was not prepared to lead the workers in a successful struggle.

The tasks that face the N. T. W. U. at present are of great importance to the future development of the union. The workers are in a mood for struggle and with proper leadership can be lead successfully in a strike that will organize the great bulk of the 30,000 textile workers. On the one hand, if the union does not live up to the expectations of the masses, the base that the N. T. W. U. has built will be smashed and the United Textile Workers Union headed by the notorious betrayer, William Batty, will again sell out the workers as it did in the 1928 strike.

When the strike was ended two years ago by the collaboration of the U. T. W. and the mill owners, the N. T. W. U. found themselves in a surprisingly strong position. Almost as many workers were organized in the left wing N. T. W. U. as in the U. T. W. organization. In fact, after the strike the N. T. W. U. continued to gain members at a pace even faster than the U. T. W.

### Factionalism Hurts Development

In recent months, when a strong and united organization is more needed than in any time in the past, Communist Party disputes have stepped in to the disadvantage of the union. Within a period of several months the New Bedford Union has had four district organizers and one can never tell when the next change will be made. The same policy of manipulation that has become the vogue in the Communist Party and the Communist movement generally, is what the New Bedford workers are facing in the "third period".

When Eli Keller, who was the union organizer for more than two years, was made national secretary of the union, several months ago, Ellen Dawson was sent to New Bedford to replace him. When the Stalinist leadership discovered that she supported the Right wing Lovestone group, Dawson was quickly replaced by John Nahorsky, unknown to the textile workers of New Bedford. However, Nahorsky did not last long, for Martin Russak, a poet from Paterson, N. J., is now at the helm.

This kind of irresponsible faction politics is not the way to organize the workers and lead a successful strike in New Bedford. All forces who accept the Left wing program of the N.T.W.U. should be utilized to prepare the New Bedford workers for struggle. With the elimination of mechanical, strangulating control and the proper preparations, a strike larger and more important than that of 1928 can be started in New Bedford. The situation is ripe, but how will the Stalinites react to it?

The mass of the militant textile workers who are now members of the N. T. W. U. must demand that the political opinion of any worker shall not bar him or her from an active or leading role in the union. The N. T. W. U. is not the Communist Party and if it attempts to base its leadership upon the acceptance of Stalin's program of socialism

in one country and national Communism, the future of the union is one of defeat. It must abandon its clique control and aim to develop a movement for a united struggle of the New Bedford workers with a leadership that can lead the workers successfully. Instead of devoting all their time to preparing for a strike against the mill owners, the party leadership in New Bedford is busy fighting Lovestone and Trotsky—and not the mill owners or A. F. of L. Such a policy is disastrous and must be opposed vigorously by the union members as well as all conscious Left wing and Communist forces.

A united struggle of the New Bedford workers against the mill owners and their wage cuts and speed up, and against their U. T. W. officialdom allies is on the order of the day.

An appeal must also be made to the U. T. W. rank and file to join in the struggle, shoulder to shoulder with the N. T. W. U. members in the common fight against wage cuts, speed up and unemployment. The future is bright for the New Bedford workers provided the Stalinites do not wreck the union to satisfy their petty factional aims.

FRANK BROMLEY

## Conditions of Metal Scappers

CHICAGO—On Lake between 1200 and 1900 West and on State Street from 1600 to 2400 South, there are whole strings of concerns making a specialty of gathering from everywhere old scraps of iron, machinery, autos, brass, copper, etc. of every description. Working conditions of those who labor for those concerns are indescribably bad. The hours are usually ten. Wages average 35 cents an hour. Most of the workers are Poles, Slavs and Negroes, that is of those who stay for any length of time at these places. Horses enjoy a lot better treatment than most of these workers.

### Steady Work

The work is very hard. Much heavy wrought iron must be broken up with sledge hammers. We work up a heavy sweat on a tough job on bitter winter mornings. When we are done, then we have to keep on working outside, maybe on a lighter job, to cool off, and so fall an easy prey to colds and the "flu". Often we have to lift extremely heavy weights while the boss stands by and hollers "to give 'er the beef".

The bosses are nearly always the worst kind of slave drivers and seem to regard the workers as scarcely human. For anyone who makes the slightest protest against the intolerable conditions, means to be at once fired or laid off. The work in many places is not steady—maybe work for a few days, get laid off, and be told to return in a few days. There are so many unemployed here at all times, anxious for some kind of a job, that these concerns are never short of help.

### Need Union

The workers need a union badly to speak for their interests and to fight against the merciless exploitation that exists now. I worked for the Monroe Iron and Machinery Company at 1322 W. Lake St., and know whereof I speak. This is one of the worst concerns, but they are all pretty much alike—rotten.

CHICAGO WORKER

## RANK AND FILE FOR LABOR PARTY

CINCINNATI—"In our opinion there is no issue before the labor movement today of greater importance than of strengthening its political power," declares the leading editorial in the Railway Clerk for February. "It is hard to escape the conviction that the nonpartisan policy does not appeal to the rank and file."

If the number on your wrapper is

**34**

then your subscription to the Militant has expired. Renew immediately in order to avoid missing any issues.

George Siskind, chairman of the New York T. U. U. L., was next called upon and read a lengthy resolution which demanded from the employers and government either Work or Wages, and then went on, in elaboration, with a long list of additional demands, among them, Defense of the Soviet Union, Against another Imperialist War, Down with the Hoover government and private property, Down with Child Labor, Join the Unemployed Councils, Free meals for children in the schools, Demonstrate on March 6th, Down with the A. F. of L., the Musteites, etc., etc.—all in the name of the Unemployed workers and their immediate problem of existence.

After Siskind's resolution there were more speeches. Finally he summarized the speeches and completed the report.

### How Not to Aid the Unemployed

There was no report of any credentials committee. (The delegates from the New York Branch of the Communist League (Opposition), James Russell and Charles Curtiss had handed in credentials at the outset.) There were no elections of any kind of committees. No executive was elected to carry out further work; and considering the conduct of the disorganized mass meeting (which is the best that can be said for this T. U. U. L. "Unemployed Conference"), perhaps it was just as well. The majority of those present left long before the meeting adjourned at 12:30.

With such conferences little success can be expected, despite favorable objective factors at present, for the demonstration scheduled for March 6th. The bombast must be done away with if there is to be a serious movement. The slogan of unity of working class forces to work for a minimum program on behalf of the unemployed is an effective one. Other organizations, trade unions, fraternal organizations, etc. can still be appealed to. The United Front and its effectiveness as a rallying call for the rank and file workers of all shades of opinion are not out of date. The Communist Party and the T. U. U. L. by themselves are insufficient to rally the unemployed and to lead them effectively. When other forces, even Communist elements with dissenting views, are rejected out of hand, the unemployed movement is doomed either to be cut to pieces or to be led into channels that make them easy victims of capitalist propaganda and of the labor fakers and reformists. The rank and file of the A.F. of L. who number hundred of thousands of the unemployed can be gotten into an unemployment movement if proper appeal for united action is made. Their officials are subject to pressure: their unwillingness to act even then can be the best means for the militants and left wingers to expose them in their real role of capitalist lackeys. But their "expose" merely by denunciation is not convincing to a rank and file. Failure to propose a united front to the organizations of the A. F. of L., Socialist Party, I. W. W. etc., on the burning question of unemployment only results, particularly under present conditions, in the isolation of the Communists from the masses and renders them ineffective in the existing and ensuing struggles.

### Develop a United Front Movement

The Communist Party must change its course and adopt methods that have brought successes in the past to the Communist movement and given it influence over growing numbers of workers.

It is not yet too late, even for the immediate future of the movement to organize the unemployed into Unemployed Councils. Genuine proposals for a united front movement, in an endeavor to draw all workers together, should be made. March 6th can only be a fleeting and passing demonstration of the unemployed if the movement remains in narrow channels. This must not be so. The conditions for a broad movement remain. Such a broad movement, basing itself on simple and elementary needs of the unemployed, is needed to give an impetus to the organization of Unemployed Councils that can act in concert and make strong demands for work or compensation, for shorter hours, against the speed-up system, upon the capitalists and the government. The militants and revolutionary workers must lend themselves to the task.

—M. A.