

NEGRO STEEL WORKERS ARE WORST EXPLOITED

Kept At Hardest Jobs Without Promotion; Get Lowest Pay; Work Longest Hours

By CYRIL BRIGGS

WITH the rise of a Negro proletariat as a result of war time industries, the stoppage of immigration and the rapid industrialization of the South, thousands of Negro workers were drawn into the steel industry of the country. In some sections of the country they represent a fairly large proportion of the steel workers. In a number of southern mills they compose nearly one half of the unskilled workers in steel.

Conditions, hellish as they are for the white steel workers are several times worse for the Negro workers in the industry. The victims of persistent and vicious discrimination on the part of the bosses, the foremen, the American Federation of Labor and backward white workers still under the influence of the imperialist ideology of race hatred and prejudice, the Negro steel workers are confined to the hardest and worst jobs in an industry notorious for nerve-wrecking speed-up, inhuman long hours and hard work under terrific heat. In most mills they cannot rise higher than keeper at the furnace, and even this is possible only with an all Negro crew. Like Negro workers in other industries, the Negro steel workers usually receive lower pay for the same work. In many plants, especially in the South, they are forced to work longer hours than the white workers; in some of the Birmingham plants, for instance, Negro workers are made to toil 10 hours a day in contrast to eight hours for skilled white workers on continuous process.

Even where, under the guise of welfare schemes, the bosses force

the workers to live in company houses, the Negro workers are grossly discriminated against, being housed in the worst shacks out of the unsanitary collection of decrepit and ancient houses furnished to workers. In Birmingham, Negro steel workers living in company houses are housed in fifty-year old shacks.

Negro steel workers, especially in the South, are regularly defrauded out of compensation when suffering injuries, which are quite frequent in mills having old-fashioned processes.

The plight of the Negro steel workers arises out of their unorganized condition and the treachery of the American Federation of Labor which has all along refused to make the slightest attempt to organize these workers but deliberately leaves them at the mercy of the imperialist bosses, whose ideology of Negro inferiority the American Federation of Labor openly supports.

The hope of these workers lies in militant organization and aggressive struggle such as is furnished in the trade union field today by the Trade Union Unity League. Only by militant struggle, side by side with the white workers, under the leadership of the revolutionary unions can the Negro workers break down the wall of prejudice erected against them by the bosses and the bureaucrats of the A. F. of L. Negro workers! Join the Trade Union Unity League!

Fight side by side with the revolutionary white workers against race prejudice, lynching, unemployment, imperialist war.