

THE MEETING OF THE T. U. U. L. NAT'L EXECUTIVE BOARD

By WM. Z. FOSTER.

THE NEB met in New York on March 14th and 15th. Present in addition to the Board proper were a dozen members of the National Committee and the 60 students of the National Training School, and many TUUL active workers. The three day meeting was crowded with activities. There were reports on the general situation and the tasks of the TUUL, including a special report on Negro work (Stachel), unemployment (Wagenknecht), organization (Foster), Labor Unity (Honig), the South (Martin), the West (Foster), convention (Foster). Special reports were also made on the work of the National Miners' Union and Metal Workers' Industrial League (Borich and Overgaard).

The question of unemployment was the center of discussion. The whole practice of the TUUL in this vital activity was carefully reviewed.

Under the general report, the TUUL strike activities were thoroughly examined. The strikers in Lawrence, textile workers, Pittsburgh miners, New York needle workers, etc., show that the TUUL, despite many mistakes, is playing an ever more active role as a strike leader. In next week's issue of Labor Unity will be published a resolution summing up the lessons of our past experiences and outlining the new tasks we confront, in the development of the revolutionary struggles. Especially valuable are the lessons of the Lawrence strike, which must be popularized.

The report on organization caused an excellent discussion on shop organization and how to build it. The question of forming grievance committees was placed in the center of our strategy for the organization of the unorganized, and the development of militant strike movements. The Board provided for a committee to prepare a thorough-going organization report to the coming convention, as well as to draft proposed amendments for the TUUL Constitution, and to publish a handbook on organization work in the industries.

The report on work among the Negroes received much attention. The National Bureau criticized itself sharply for weakness of this work. Steps were taken to immediately establish an actively functioning Negro department and to intensify our field work, not only in a general way, but in a concentrated way in the respective unions.

The discussion on Labor Unity was the best ever made at any TUUL Board meeting. The delegates evinced a determination to really build Labor Unity to actively put into effect the program for this purpose adopted at the Board.

The TUUL national Bureau was sharply and correctly criticized for failure to develop real work among the Latin Americans in this country and a support of the struggling revolutionary movements in Central and South America. The Latin American department will be reorganized immediately and this work begins intensively.

The Board decided to hold the TUUL National Convention in Chicago in the first week in September, the exact date to be announced later. The regular TUUL convention which shall last 5 days, will be preceded by a 2 day mass convention of the unemployed. The printed material for the convention (program, organization report, etc.), will be published in Labor Unity for general discussion, two months in advance of the convention. The next Board meeting will work out the final plans for the convention and issue the convention call.

The Board endorsed a general plan for the concentration of the main efforts of the TUUL in the textile, metal, mining and marine industries, and also in the big industrial centers of Chicago, Pittsburgh, Detroit and Cleveland, at the same time, the work of organization will be pushed in other districts, primarily with the local forces. Special programs of action will be developed by the national Bureau for the South,

and West, with special reference to the oil, agricultural, metal mining and lumber industries, and the big unemployment movement. This plan of concentration will be further elaborated by the national Bureau in later issues of Labor Unity.

The Board devoted much attention to the growing terror, marked by the rising wave of lynchings, arrests of militants, raids on strikes (Lawrence). Fish committee deportation program, etc. It called for the aggressive demand for the release of the class war prisoners. It greeted the attack of Tom Mooney upon the corrupt A. F. of L. leadership and called upon all workers to make the most militant struggle to free Mooney.

The Board meeting characterized the present talk of the A. F. of L. bureaucrats, socialists, IWW, etc., about the 6-hour day and 5-day week as so much "left demagoguery" designed to screen and facilitate the introduction of the stagger plan of the bosses. It reindorsed the RILU slogan for the 7-hour day without reduction in pay (including the 6-hour day for youth and those employed in hazardous industries).

The assembled delegates greeted the continued victories of the 5-Year Plan. They reiterated this determination to spare no efforts to acquaint American workers with the revolutionary significance of these developments and to mobilize them to defend the Soviet Union against the growing war attacks.

The Board expressed the view that it will facilitate organization work if the oil workers are formed into a distinct oil workers industrial union instead of into merely a department of the National Miners' Union, and that the auto workers and packing house workers should be similarly organized, consideration of making these adjustments will be taken up with the miners, metal workers' and food workers' national unions and leagues.

The Board meeting was marked with optimism and enthusiasm. At the November meeting of the National Committee, confronted with a rapid numerical decline and serious weakening of the position of our organizations, the delegations frankly realized the situation as highly critical.

But at this meeting no one spoke of crisis. Difficulties are still present in most serious forms. Gross errors have been made in strike strategy, our organization work is still very insufficient, the use of partial demands is only beginning to be understood and trade union democracy remains at a low ebb in our unions. But much improvement has been made in these various respects. This was clear from the several reports. The decline in membership has been practically checked, several of the organizations showing increases. A beginning has been made at stabilizing the union leadership, finances, etc. The TUUL has been able to come forward in a leading role in the struggle against unemployment. It has also led several strikes, the most important of which was the partially successful struggle of the Lawrence workers against the American Woolen Company.

The next several months will be crucial ones in the building of the TUUL. The economic crisis is deepening. The workers' standards are being slashed on all sides. The workers are developing a sharper and more intense fighting spirit. More and more they turn to the TUUL for leadership. But our organization has many weaknesses. The price of leadership is that we learn how to develop the partial demands of the workers and to establish the elementary forms, grievance committees, among them, to begin the struggle. The consideration of these basic problems was the center of the recent Board meeting, the kernel around which all the other business revolved. Fruitful discussions were held, correct decisions taken. Now let the practice reflect these actions by rapidly increasing the organization and leadership of the Trade Union Unity League.