

# Call Negro Workers to Meet

As a special drive to bring to the attention of the Negro workers the call of the Trade Union Educational League to send delegates to a National Trade Union Unity Convention, in Cleveland, June 1-2, the Negro Department of the T. U. E. L. has issued a special statement to Negro workers. The statement has been endorsed by the American Negro Labor Congress and is to accompany the regular call addressed to all workers when distributed widespread in those districts where there are many Negroes in the industries. The call to the Negro workers is as follows:

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**FELLOW WORKERS:** The National Committee of the Trade Union Educational League has called for the election of delegates to constitute the Trade Union Unity Congress, to meet in the City of Cleveland, Ohio, at 10 a. m. on June 1, 1929, and to conclude on June 2. This call is of special interest to Negro workers.

With the partial check of immigration which came about during the last war, and which has continued since, bringing about the migration of Negro workers to northern industrial centers and with the growth of industry in the south, the demand for Negro workers in the large industries has increased.

The introduction of more machinery in the factories would, under a better system, shorten the hours of labor, but under the present capitalist system it is used by the employers to reduce the number of workers, increase the amount of work and lengthen the hours for those left on the job.

Since the great majority of Negro workers are unskilled and unorganized, they suffer more intensely than any other group from the effects of rationalization.

They suffer from double oppression, being oppressed as Negroes and as workers.

They are the last to be hired and are always the first to be fired. In every shop, mill, or factory they are given the worst jobs.

Negro workers are always the lowest paid workers in all industries. The worst and lowest paid jobs are considered "Negro jobs" and the better jobs are for the whites.

The Negro worker, no matter how capable, is seldom allowed to step into what is considered by the employers as a white man's job.

In the industrial centers to which these workers migrate, they are forced to live in the worst houses, in the worst districts and pay the highest rents in spite of the low wages that they receive.

Because of the small earnings of the men the wives and children are forced to work in sweat shops and in the fields under the most miserable conditions.

The women are the prey of the lust of the white bosses and overseers. The children have little opportunity to attend schools because of being forced to work at an early age. In the South they are forced to attend Jim Crow schools unusually far away from where they live.

The Negro worker has always been used by the bosses to reduce the cost of labor.

The white bosses, therefore, consider the Negro a valuable source of cheap labor. We could go on endlessly talking about our miserable conditions. What we must do now is to find a way to better these conditions. That is the purpose of this call.

We must organize together with the fighting unions of white work-

## T. U. E. L. Negro Department Issues Special Appeal to Send Delegates to Cleveland

ers who are willing to fight together with us to better the conditions of the working class as a whole.

Since we are a minority group we cannot make this fight alone, nor can the white worker better his own conditions without fighting together with us against the whole system of oppression.

We all know about the American Federation of Labor and its policy towards the Negro worker. In spite of its general constitution and declaration, that it does not discriminate against the Negro, its affiliated bodies do, and during its 40 years or more of existence it has never made a serious effort to organize the Negro workers. It is only interested in the Negro worker insofar as he can be prevented from scabbing on his white fellow worker, but has never prevented the White Unions from scabbing on the Negro workers. While there are a few A. F. of L. unions which, under pressure, have admitted some Negro workers, the general policy is to organize Jim Crow Unions for them in order to tie their hands and keep them on the lowest economic level of all the workers.

This organization has been betraying both white and black workers for years. Typical of its attitude toward the Negro workers who are a part of the great mass of unskilled workers was its betrayal last year of the pro-

posed strike of the Pullman Porters. Even its so-called recognition today of the Pullman Porters' Brotherhood is a classical example of its treachery. The methods of these fakirs in issuing charters to each local of the Brotherhood instead of a national charter to the Brotherhood as a whole is simply designed to weaken and destroy the organization and prevent its development into a fighting union. Negro workers throughout the United States will never forget the traitorous role of this Jim Crow, Ku Klux organization.

The Trade Union Educational League and those who support it are the only organizations that have carried on a fight for the organization of all workers regardless of race, nationality or color. Its policy in the various unions has been to carry on a consistent fight for the admittance of Negroes and the breaking up of the exclusion policy of these fakirs for many years. The T. U. E. L., which is the American Section of the Red International of Labor Unions is still carrying on the fight against the traitorous leadership of the A. F. of L. for the organization of Negro workers into all its affiliated unions that bar them and to force them to admit them on equal basis with the white workers. It has also fostered new unions as the Needle Trades who recently carried on a successful strike against the bosses, Textile,

and new Miners Union. There are almost the only unions in existence which practice absolute equality for all workers regardless of race, and has Negro as well as white workers on all leading committees.

As examples of the fact that these unions practice what they preach, we have Wm. Boyce, a Negro miner, vice-president of the New Miners Union, Henry Rosemond, who was one of the first workers beaten up by the police during the recent Needle trade strike in New York City, and who is a member of the General Executive Board of the Needle Trades Industrial Union. Virginia Allen, a colored woman needle worker, is also a member of this Executive Board.

The Trade Union Unity Convention is called for the purpose of uniting all groups of organized and unorganized workers into a solid united fighting front against the bosses.

This Convention, which is of particular interest for Negro workers, will deal with all problems affecting the unorganized Negro and white workers.

It will fight against capitalist wars, which draft the Negro workers as tools and cannon fodder to help conquer the workers of other races and nationalities and then deny these workers rights as citizens after their return. It will fight for the organization of the oppressed Negro women workers and will carry on a strenuous fight against child labor.

It will fight for social insurance, which will benefit the workers who are injured by the speed-up system, and who are forced to retire from work at an early age because of disability.

It will advance the platform of International Trade Union Unity. It will organize the workers, black and white, on an industrial basis instead of the narrow craft basis of the A. F. of L.

It will fight for the admittance of all Negro seamen and dock workers, etc., into the various unions that discriminate against them, or failing in this, it will organize new unions of white and Negro workers in these industries.

It will create one common trade union center for all class struggle organizations.

All groups of organized and unorganized Negro workers must get together and elect delegates to send to this convention.

This is our opportunity to fight against race discrimination and better our conditions as a whole.

**NEGRO WORKERS! SEND YOUR DELEGATES TO THE COMING CLEVELAND CONVENTION!**

**Our Emancipation Is in Our Own Hands!**

**Let's Quit Whining and Start Fighting!**

**We Must Prepare to Fight for Ourselves!**

**Equal Pay for Equal Work!**

**Shorter Work Day!**

**Against Peonage!**

**Against Jim Crow Schools!**

**Against White Terrorism in the South!**

**Strengthen Our Fight Against Child Labor!**

**Take Our Women Out of the Fields and Sweat Shops!**

**Build a New Trade Union Center!**

**Fight Against the Race Discrimination Policy of the A. F. of L. Leadership!**

**Carry on Active Fight Against Lynching of Negro Workers and Farmers!**

(Signed) OTTO HALL,

Director Negro Dept., Trade Union Educational League.

Endorsed by American Negro Labor Congress

## Women Workers Militant in Fur Industry Struggle

By CLARA MELTZER.

A large number of women workers are employed in the fur industry, a luxury craft in the needle trades. In fact, there is no fur shop where women are not employed.

The conditions of the women furriers are miserable; the speed-up system is intense; the wages are low; the hours are long; the period of employment is short, and long periods of unemployment follow.

When there is work, workers are rushed under the excuse that the garment being made is a special or that the rich lady to whom the garment belongs must make a train. At many occasions the finishers working on a rich lady's garment are not allowed to go down for lunch until the garment is finished.

The hours are 10 to 12 a day, part of which is called overtime, but which is paid for as regular time. The work is hard and unsanitary. After a short time of working long hours during the season, handling the hairy fur coats containing all sorts of sharp chemicals and paints, workers often contract tuberculosis. Dark and filthy shops add to those bad conditions. No insurance is provided for women workers in case of such sickness or for unemployed workers.

The women workers played a prominent part in the famous fur strike of 1926. They were seen in large numbers on the picket lines where many were arrested and beaten by the police. During the 17 weeks of struggle, the women fur workers bravely resisted the clubbing of the police and the jail sentences. They eagerly participated

in the mass meetings called by the Joint Board and in all other strike activities led by the left wing. When an attempt was made to break the strike, an attempt made by the International union after a secret conference with the bosses at Washington, D. C., the women furriers as well as the men crowded into Carnegie Hall and voiced a vigorous protest which resulted in the failure of the conspiracy. After a short period, the bosses were forced to give in, they were powerless against the vigorous strikers and a victorious settlement followed.

At that time the women workers, as well as the men, enjoyed better conditions in the shops: higher wages, far shorter hours with the abolition of overtime. Many unorganized women joined the union and took a direct interest in its struggles. The reactionary International and the A.F.L. could not very well digest the progress and control the left wing enjoyed in the fur shops. The reactionaries made a deal with the bosses, a promise to bring about the same conditions as existed before the strike; the workers were thrown down from jobs if they refused to register with the International.

The Joint Board declared a strike against the bosses and the reactionary International. The workers responded with the same spirit of 1926. The traitorous International provided fur manufacturers with scabs. Women and men furriers picketed the shops in spite of the injunctions issued. Wholesale arrests followed; many women served jail terms as bravely as they did picket duty.