

# Unemployment Changes

By J. T. Murphy

ONE of the most interesting reports yet issued by the Minister of Labor has appeared this week on the changes in unemployment. It serves to shatter a lot of illusions as to who are the unemployed and enables to make a much more satisfactory explanation of some of the fluctuations in the organizations of the unemployed. Time and time again the enemy press and spouters have denounced the unemployed as a mob who don't want work, who are bleeding the exchequer white and living in the lap of chosen idleness. From all the terrible statements made concerning the unemployed it would be easy for us to conceive of the unemployed as the great mob who had read, marked and learned Lafargue's "Right to be Lazy" and had made up their minds that the best way to apply his philosophy was to fall out of work and draw the "dole."

## What'll They Say Now?

What these prize politicians will say now, we don't know. This report so completely knocks the bottom out of the argument that it must leave them guessing. Instead of the unemployed being a more or less permanent section of the workingclass who can't get work, this report makes it perfectly clear that the personal of the unemployed is continually changing and that any charges that are to be made against them must be leveled against the whole working class. It is shown that 14 per cent of the personnel of the unemployed is changed every week. Further, that instead of the working class being divided into a section that is nearly permanently employed and a section that is almost permanently unemployed, that in any one year one in every three of insured workers claim unemployed benefit during the year. Out of 11,000 workers of the country, during the insurance year of November, 1922, to October, 1923, there were 3,707,000 claims for benefit.

The report goes still further and enables us to estimate the number and proportion of the workers in each of the main industries who in the course of the 11½ months of the insurance year presented themselves at the unemployment exchanges to claim unemployed benefit. They range from 82 per cent in the shipbuilding industry to 9.8 per cent of the workers in local government service.

The following table will show how this turnover of unemployed is spread over the various industries.

	Percentage of insured workers who claimed benefit	Average rate of unemployment June-Dec. 1923
	Men	
Shipbuilding .....	82.	43.5
Shipping .....	66.1	19.1
Iron and Steel Mfg.....	59.7	20.6
Engineering .....	59.4	20.4
Cotton .....	53.2	15.8
Building .....	48.6	12.4
Canal, River and Dock workers .....	46.0	24.4

Amongst women and girls 91.4 per cent in the brass and allied metal manufacturers had to draw on insurance, 67.6 per cent of the bread and biscuit workers, 63.6 per cent of the cotton workers and 51.9 per cent of the pottery workers, had to do likewise.

Another striking fact is that 52.8 per cent are under 35 years of age among the men and of these at least half are between 18 and 24 the years when they are passing out of apprenticeship and begin to lay claim to full tradesmen's wages.

## Short Term Doles.

The average length of time on unemployed benefit is shown to be 75

days. The proportion of persons drawing benefit for not more than 4 weeks was 22.7, the proposition showing for 8 weeks is 33.6 per cent, for 12 weeks 47.2 per cent and for 24 weeks 69.4 per cent. In the shipping industry 16.1 per cent drew benefit for the whole 44 weeks.

This continual change over of the personnel of unemployed accounts for the many ups and downs of the unemployed movement and the immense difficulties that have to be overcome to establish and maintain anything like durable organization amongst the unemployed. How often, just as we have secured a capable organizer to tackle the job of organization in some particular district have we seen the organization spring up only to fall to pieces in a few weeks because the organizer had found a job. The number of unemployed may not be less but the new unemployed may have some slight resources which makes him a little indifferent to organization for a few weeks and there may not be amongst them the capable leaders for dealing with the question.

How often have we seen some district right in the forefront of the agitation only to find it all evaporated again in a few weeks. And here is the explanation. The unemployed are not a class of their own. They represent a continually recurring condition of the whole working class. To measure the strenght of the unemployed by their organization, their dues paying membership would therefore be a mistake. It can be shown that there were less number of the unemployed actually paying to the Unemployed Workers Committee at the time of the Great Hunger March when unemployment became the burning question of the day, than there are today when it is difficult to get an agitation going on the question.

## The "Gap."

A variety of factors have operated—to take the sting out of the unemployed agitation not the least of which has been the abolition of the "gap" in unemployed pay. This gap was the interval between the periods of payment introduced by the Lloyd

George crowd for the purpose of urging the unemployed to look more intently for work. This report shows how futile and atrocious was this imposition. But now the "gap" has vanished it means the periodic drive of the masses to the local boards of guardians for poor Law relief has also vanished and the agitation thus caused has been eliminated.

Still there are more than a million on the unemployed register and so long as this state of affairs obtains an organization based upon unemployment has great scope. And indeed there are more workers subscribing to the National Unemployed Workers Committee than at any time since its inception. Its close association with the General Council of the Trades Union Congress along with the demonstration that unemployment hits the majority of the workers should insure the unemployed organization becoming the natural center of activity for the trades unionists especially who become unemployed. That is the tendency, becoming more marked the longer the unemployed crisis exists.

## The Communist Candidates—Look Them Over!

**GORDON W. OWENS** (colored), Workers Party candidate for Congress from the First Congressional District, Chicago.

Twenty-eight years of age, born in Chicago. Has grade school education. Began slaving in 1911 as A. D. T. messenger boy. Later became stockyards worker. Joined I. W. W. in 1914. Kicked out of Swift's Packing concern for urging unionism to fellow-workers. Commenced speaking publicly for a social revolution in 1919.

Joined Communist Party in 1920. Member of Workers Party since beginning. Is working today as general worker in printing house.

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**JOSEPH PODKULSKI**, Workers Party candidate for Congress from the Fourth Congressional District, Chicago.

Born in Austrian Poland, 1889; 35 years of age. Is a needle trades worker and has been working at that trade since age of 14 years, in Poland and the United States. Joined International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union in 1919. He has been a member of the Executive and Joint Board of the I. L. G. W. U. In 1923 he was recording secretary of Local 104, I. L. G. W. U. Today is member Executive Board of local.

Is a delegate to the Chicago Federation of Labor.

Former member socialist party both in Poland and America. Joined Workers Party at its formation. Is Assistant Secretary, Polish Federation, Workers Party.

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**HYMAN EPSTEIN**, Workers Party candidate for Congress from the Fifth Congressional District, Chicago.

Started working when 12 years of age. Joined trade union movement in 1901. Has been steady member of union since 1910. Was member of United Garment Workers, Local 21. Now member of Amalgamated Clothing Workers, Local 61, since 1917. Like other workers, has been blacklisted often in labor's struggle for freedom from exploitation. Has put efforts into Amalgamated to make it a truly class conscious and revolutionary union. Aided in attempt to organize electrical workers in clothing industry in 1919. A. C. W. sent him to conduct strike of clothing workers in Detroit in 1922. Strike lasted 14 weeks.

Joined socialist party in 1904. Left S. P. in 1921 and joined the Workers Party when organized.

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Comrades out gathering signatures to place Workers Party candidates on the ballot are often asked by workers they visit to tell something about the candidates. That is right. Above we are giving a synopsis of the lives of our Communist candidates. Histories of the other candidates will be printed in coming issues of the DAILY WORKER. Clip these items and use them in your work of gathering signatures. They will help you considerably. Get acquainted with the Workers Party candidates and then help acquaint other workers with them.

## The Dictatorship of the Proletariat

"THERE is only one way in which the exploitation of the workers and farmers of this country can be ended. That is thru the workers organizing their mass power, ending the capitalist dictatorship and establishing the Workers' and Farmers' Government.

"In place of the capitalist dictatorship there must be established the rule of the workers. The governmental power must be used in the interest of the workers and farmers as it is now used by the capitalist dictatorship in the interest of the capitalist class."—From the election program of the Workers Party of America.

## INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY MEET HERE ON SUNDAY

### Young Workers League in Demonstration

**MOBILIZATION DAY**, Sept. 12, has accentuated the importance of International Youth Day, which is to be held on Sept. 7, at 8 p. m., in the Northwest Hall, under the auspices of the Young Workers League, to such an extent that the youth movement of this country is planning to put all its organizational strength into a stirring campaign against imperialism.

Youth Day will be celebrated all over the country this year on the basis of specific demands and especially as a protest against the imperialist wars.

The speakers for the Chicago meeting are John Edwards, recently returned from the Fifth Congress of the Communist and Fourth Congress of the Young Communist International; Earl Browder of the Trade Union Educational League and J. Louis Engdahl of the DAILY WORKER.

Youth Day is the most important celebration of the Young Communist International and in Russia is a legal holiday. It is celebrated with fervor in Germany, France, Sweden and other European countries. In the United States, Youth Day is growing in importance, especially since the Young Workers League of America is the only working class youth organization fighting for immediate and ultimate demands of the Young Workers in this country as well as in the interest of the child laborers.

There is no doubt that the campaign against mobilization carried on by the Young Workers League will develop into a militant Communist struggle against militarist wars. The Young Workers League on Youth Day are striving to bring out the class nature of capitalist wars as something which is being hidden under a maze of words by the present pacifist activity.

Because of its importance, Youth Day celebration in Chicago is expected to be without question the best attended gathering of young workers, party members and sympathizers that has yet been staged in this city.