

**A**SIDE from the great attempt in the steel industry led by William Z. Foster very little has been done in the post war years to organize the enormous masses of unorganized workers in the U. S. A. In fact the number of organized workers has considerably decreased since the war and there are now less members within the folds of organized labor than before the war.

It must be clear to every one that it is not any more a matter of passing resolutions to put labor organizations on record, for there is hardly any organization that has not passed such resolutions, or can be made to do it ever again at each convention. Yet we know that during this present prosperity period practically nothing was done. Instead of organizing the unorganized the union treasuries have been invested in labor banking and all sorts of financial ventures in exploitation of industry and financing best described in what is known as labor capitalism and class collaboration.

The first step in organizing the unorganized in modern American industry would be amalgamation, Labor Party, simultaneous with the building up of big consumers co-operative movements. In brief, utilization of all the forces and methods of modern struggle of labor that go with highly centralized and efficient modern capitalism. The leadership of the American trade unions is as far removed from the above proposed methods as we are from feudalism. It prefers to let the unions drift to disaster on the line of least resistance, self-aggrandisement and personal profit, instead of adopting modern progressive policies.

It must be frankly stated that even with modern

methods on the part of the existing labor movement the problem of organizing the unorganized in the U. S. A., the country of the most powerful capitalism, the task would be a very difficult and enormous one. As it stands now it is enough to make one stagger in despair. Yet the left wing inside and outside the A. F. of L. must undertake this task and in doing so be conscious of the fact that it will have to fight not only the powerful capitalist combines, but in addition the trade union bureaucracy itself.

The organization formed inside the plant, mill or mine, must by the very nature of things function secretly and will usually be very small in number with the leading circle being unknown to most of

No matter how difficult this and other instances show the semi-secret or secret work to be there are ways to carry on. The greatest obstacle is really not the terrorism inside the factory, the threat of discharge, etc., but the political interferences of the authorities in behalf of the employers and against the workers. Any attempt at organization of any importance at all meets immediately with the most repressive measures. It becomes at once a political struggle with all the blows aimed at the workers. We need but remind ourselves of the march of the West Virginia miners to organize the open shop mines. Then the federal injunction against the miners under Danaher, more recently the Passaic police brutalities and the thousands of arrests in the recent garment strikes, down to the injunctions forbidding even any attempt at organization, such as the injunction obtained by the New York traction trusts forbidding the union from doing anything that may even tend towards organization of the subway workers.

Civil liberties established by the constitution, by law and made part of every day life by custom are being ignored by the authorities in innumerable instances when labor's interests are involved. For the past few years laws are being put on the statute books to oppress labor, like the numerous anti-syndicalist laws. There is the Watson-Parker law on the railroads outlawing strikes. There is the U. S. supreme court decision outlawing sympathy strikes like in the Stone Cutters' Union case. The police, judicial, state and federal authorities in actual prac-

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The day dripped heat and the earth oozed sweat and the subway digger hadn't had his dinner yet and he wanted it bad. It was damn hot, too, but you couldn't stop your diggin' till the whistle blew. So he kept on diggin' and his back got sore, . . . "God! I'll rest now if I don't get any work no more!" He threw down his shovel and he lay down to rest . . . . . a rotten beam fell down on and smashed in his chest.

—EDWIN ROLFE.



"Come right in boys, we need you to keep the men from organizing"

# Organizing the Unorganized

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tice however, go much further than any of the laws. Fascist anti-labor methods practiced under cover are becoming the vanguard and are being practiced against militant labor with the collusion and even



open support of the A. F. of L. leadership. Witness Matthew Woll's activities in New York and as acting president of the Civic Federation.

The workers in the big industries are over ripe for organization. This has been shown by the activities of the small number of groups inside the big industries that have been formed thus far. The outstanding examples are the groups in the Detroit automobile plants, which after a few months work now publish plant papers with a total circulation of 35,000. Amongst these workers, who are the most exploited by the over-lords and autocrats of industry is the real volcano of proletarian discontent and struggle that has not been even tapped as yet by our activity.

But the group activities inside the plants as strategic and important as it is can only bring the desired results if a broad political movement can be developed that will bring this tremendous proletarian industrial army striving for better conditions and organization into a broad political stream to restore the rights to organize, strike and picket and to restore civil liberties. Many sections of the petit bourgeoisie, particularly the farmers, could be brought into a united front on such issues. In many of the typical industrial farms of the U. S. there are no labor unions and those that are, in many instances dominated by the stool pigeons and agents of the bosses, will not go into a political movement against the old parties and towards a Labor Party. Yet it is quite clear that the political oppression of labor has made the situation quite ripe for political expression and political organization, based on the present conditions of the workers' economic, political and ideological. In many instances political organization and activity offers greater opportunities of mass organization and open agitation than direct attack on the economic bastilles of the trusts, and offers opportunities to draw the intelligensia of all the various categories of labor, petty bourgeois, etc. into the struggle and leadership against the ever increasing oppression of imperialist capitalism.

There must be political protection in order to enable labor to organize and prevent its organizations once established from being crushed by the police club of capital. The work in the factories must be protected, supplemented and encircled by a whole series of supporting and complimentary organizations of which the political is the most important, also cooperatives, fraternal and sport organizations, that even under the iron heel of imperialist capitalism can still operate with relative freedom. In the establishment of such organizations and in support of our great task amongst the unorganized the work and experience of the left wing in the existing labor unions inside and outside the A. F. of L., will be of great aid. Any effective work amongst the unorganized is sure to still the imagination of labor. This was demonstrated in striking form in the Passaic struggle, which was supported by hundreds of A. F. of L. locals despite the denunciation of Green, Woll and Company. Effective work amongst the unorganized is the key to the American labor movement, the road to the defeat of reaction in the labor movement and the road to the victory of the American workingclass. Let all militants get ready for this the greatest of our tasks.