

Happy Valley

By TOM JOHNSON.

THE workers of Happy Valley are preparing to march again. Five times in the last three years the 5,000 workers in the great Bemberg and Glazstoff rayon mills at Elizabethton, Tenn., have streamed out of the mills in the middle of the day and another strike was on.

Six months after the huge German-owned mills first opened, in March, 1927, without a union to back them, with no organization at all, these Happy Valley workers struck. They struck against the 12-hour day and wages of \$8.96 for the girls for a 72-hour week. The strike had no leadership and no organized direction. The company's pimps soon discouraged the strikers, and broke their solid ranks and the 5,000 men and women drifted back to work. The strike was lost.

In October of the same year the workers came out and again with no organization and no leadership the strike was lost.

Spent by these defeats the workers went back but the spirit of revolt still smoldered and on April 1st, 1929, the 5,000 struck as one man. This time the United Textile Workers Union came into the situation with their usual strike-breaking tactics. So well did these mis-leaders do their work that in 5 days later the workers went back to the mills on the advice of that arch betrayer of the American working class, McGrady, aided in this situation by the "progressive" traitor, Hoffman of the U.T.W.U. The workers were induced to call off the strike by the usual promises by the company of the 8-hour day, wage increases, better conditions, etc. They went back without a union agreement.

Then started the same old game. The company went to work to systematically weed out the best fighters, the strongest union men. Over a hundred men and girls were fired before the workers clearly realized what was up and then they answered this treachery of the company and the U.T.W.U. officials with the greatest strike of all on April 15th, 1929. The spirit of the strikers was high. Until June, 15th they held the company at bay and prevented over a few hundred scabs entering the mills. During these two months the U.T.W.U. officials with their efficient assistance of Judas McGrady did their best to curb the militancy of the strikers—but in vain. Injunctions against mass picketing were broken by thousands of workers as fast as the courts could issue them. Attempts to kidnap strike leaders were answered by the guns of the strikers, and when the smoke blew away four of the kidnappers were dead or dying, one of them a Baldwin-Felts detective, one the plant doctor and two local business men.

On June 15th, McGrady and Kelly of the U.T.W.U. announced that they had concluded an agreement with the mill owners and the men were to go back to work. According to this pair of scoundrels the workers' demands were granted and there was to be no discrimination against any of the strikers. Significantly enough McGrady and his partner in the sell-out, Kelly, did not produce the agreement or show it to the men. The strikers trusted their leaders and the strike was called off. Back they went to work—to find out how badly they had been betrayed. Out of the 5,000 that struck only 2,000 were taken back. The rest were put on the permanent blacklist. The supposed "agreement" of McGrady and Kelly proved to be non-existent—nothing but a trumped-up lie to get the men back to work. McGrady and Kelly promptly left town—their work of betrayal well done and in all probability their pockets well lined by the grateful company.

In October of the same year the workers again begged the U.T.W.U. to lead them into the struggle. The situation became so threatening that the mills sent in a hurry call for the best ally, Gorman, the president of the U.T.W.U. Gorman answered and came to Elizabethton where the union hating business men of the town were "kind" enough to allow him to use the County Court House for a union mass meeting. He used it to such good advantage that the 2,500 men who attended, determined to strike, were finally persuaded by Gorman to go back to work "until spring."

The workers remembered and last spring, in March, despite the best efforts of Paul Fuller of the A. F. of L. and the best labor traitors in the leadership of the U.T.W.U., the mills were struck again. By this time all but about 200 union men had been fired from the mills while the union stood idly by. When the strike came thousands of the non-union workers came to the union hall and agreed to strike with the union men if only the union would agree to share what relief came in with all the strikers. The U.T.W.U.,

Building Workers Stagger

By JACK TAYLOR.

"WE will install the twenty hour week with no increase in wages," said Zausner, official of Dist. Council No. 9 of the Brotherhood of Painters, affiliated to the American Federation of Labor. He was talking about the "Stagger System" as proposed by President Hoover.

The "Stagger System" is the newest creation of the bosses and the A. F. L. to place the full burden of the constantly growing crisis upon the backs of the workers.

Means a Wage Cut.

The proposal of the "Stagger System" to the building trades workers by Zausner is in reality a proposal to cut the wage-scale of the workers and at the same time compel one part of workers to remain unemployed while the other part is subjected to all of the speed-up and rotten conditions that exist on the job.

Why does Zausner propose the "Stagger System" at this time? Here are some of the reasons:

The building bosses together with the A. F. L. officials are trying to solve the crisis on the backs of the building trades workers. With the present great slump in building construction and the continued withdrawal of finance capital from the building industry, a greater and greater portion of the building workers remain unemployed.

Majority Is Jobless.

It is estimated that approximately 75 per cent of all building trades workers are at present unemployed. With the coming of winter this army of unemployed will reach an even greater figure. The remaining 25 per cent are employed part time and are worked under the most miserable conditions.

Why the "Stagger System."

It is to meet this situation and in an attempt to stem the growing demands of the building trades workers for unemployment relief and a shorter work-day with an increase in wages, that the bosses together with the officials of the A. F. L. have proposed the "Stagger System" to the workers in the building industry.

In Local 905, 499, 848 and other painters' locals affiliated to the Brotherhood of Painters where the "Stagger System" has been proposed in the form of a 20-hour week with reduction in wages, the workers, following the leadership of the Trade Union Unity League, have successfully defeated this scheme to "Stagger" the workers. In its place the workers are demanding a shorter work day with an increase in wages and unemployment insurance.

Broach Gets Licked.

Four thousand electrical workers of Local 3 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, have recently defeated a fake unemployment scheme proposed to them by H. H. Broach, International president of the electrical workers and better known as "Little Caesar" of the building trades. Broach's scheme was in the form of a tax of one day's pay every three

now stooped to the lowest depths of treachery and refused to pay relief to any strikers except those who had been members of the union for at least 12 months and were in good standing. Thus the union entered into combination with the company to starve the unorganized strikers into submission. They succeeded and the strike was lost—the last of five tremendous struggles in less than three years.

The United Textile Workers Union will sell out no more strikes at Elizabethton. To almost every worker in the great mills the name of the U.T.W.U. has come to mean all that is treacherous and corrupt. It has come to stand for an organization which has as its highest mission the betrayal of the workers to the bosses. No high sounding "progressive" phrases of the Hoffmans and the Fullers will again deceive the workers of Happy Valley. The workers are today preparing for new struggle. In the mills and in the homes of workers scattered up and down Stoney Creek, in Valley Forge, and all up and down the valley, the workers are again talking strike. This time they are determined to make it a real strike—a revolutionary struggle against the oppression of the mill owners. The next strike in Happy Valley—and it is not far off—will be led by the revolutionary union of the textile workers—the National Textile Workers Union.