

A Review of the Recent National Tour

The Sweep of the Economic Crisis; Its Effects on the Revolutionary Movement

A tour of the country today reveals particularly the stark picture of the realities of unemployment. Cities like Chicago and St. Louis, one can say, are taking on a desolate appearance. The Illinois government itself admits 1,049,000 unemployed in the state, or 15 1/2 per cent of the total population. Yet everywhere the signs of a live virile unemployment movement of a mass character are quite absent, although a number of councils have been organized in the various cities. Throughout the official party there is an immense turnover of membership. As many as join the party ranks, pressed by the realities of the crisis, leave it again in just as large numbers. As a matter of fact most of the new recruits leave its ranks after a very brief sojourn. Upon the party this turnover is making its indelible imprint.

In the Left Opposition branches this is not the case. We are gaining new members slowly, the new recruits remain in our ranks, but our members are still small. What then becomes of these many "visitors" to the party ranks? Most of them take leave again because of being repelled by the existing bureaucracy or specifically by its blundering mistakes. Some of them learn a valuable lesson in the process and come toward the Left Opposition. A few become so disgusted that they are browbeaten back into their former apathy, but most of them unquestionably remain within the movement, sympathetic to Communism. In this sense the movement as a whole has certainly experienced growth. But within the party itself the ideologically low level is particularly apparent. The political life within the units is reaching zero.

In the Illinois mine fields this condition is reflected as well as is also the fact of the party's failure to employ the united front policy. Compelled by the power of job control concentrated in the hands of the union officials, and by the agreement reached between the John L. Lewis and John H. Walker cliques, the Illinois miners are again all back in the U. M. W. Now they may expect a wage cut at the expiration of their agreement in April. But testifying to the opportunities which have been available is the fact that in several local sections progressive elements still have considerable influence. The National Miners' Union is non-existent in that field. Its attitude of boycotting the rebel movements and its failure to meet them on a united front basis brought this result.

evidently had so far had very little contact with the Communist movement but nevertheless had received one object lesson from the capitalist crisis. A couple of Stalin supporters took exception to our views, but it came in the form of merely repeating old slanders of Trotsky always having been a menshevik. Unfortunately for the objectors, a person who evidently had strayed in by accident very fervently took up the cudgels for the capitalist system which was under indictment of the whole audience. And despite our efforts to make the distinction clear, it quite naturally turned its scorn almost equally against all three objectors in common.

The Tour Further West
In Kansas City we met a different kind of opposition. The party functionaries spared no efforts to keep the workers away from our meeting. Members from the unemployed councils were warned to stay away. Those who had distributed our leaflets were labeled "dangerous to the working class." But there was no evidence that the workers took that very seriously and those party members who came to our meeting greeting the first remarks with a sneer, soon became attentive and listened very carefully.

In both of these cities there are good opportunities for the movement in general and for the Left Opposition. Our units, however, are as yet weak numerically, a condition which we must, of course, endeavor to overcome. In this respect comrade Clarke, who went to Kansas City to stay for a period, is doing good pioneer work. Our St. Louis branch is taking up much more effective work. Perhaps there could be no better tribute to this fact than the panicky fear with which the party bureaucrats have gone about destroying the Mooney united front movement which was being initiated to develop in Southern Illinois particularly through the assistance of our St. Louis branch.

Minneapolis Movement Growing
In this respect we have had similar experiences in Minneapolis. There, our members have for years been deeply rooted in the labor movement and established real prestige for themselves among progressive and Left wing workers. Naturally our members would be of serious account in a Mooney movement actually organized on a united front basis. Because of this, the petty party bureaucrats worked overtime maneuvering to keep our branch representation out. By a little trick it was accomplished at the first conference, but with the result that all representation, outside of the party and its auxiliaries, dropped near the vanishing point. This, however, can soon be remedied and the Mooney movement rebuilt.

Our Minneapolis branch had not less than four public meetings arranged for the tour with a banquet thrown in for good measure. But it occurred just during the period of the Christmas holidays which to an extent accounted for the fact that these meetings were not as large as they should have been when organized by a live and strong branch. Nevertheless the elements mostly attracted were those with a militant record in the local labor movement. Because of that, the discussions following each lecture became very thorough and fruitful.

A portion of the Minneapolis stay became devoted to the problems of our branch and its function. It has succeeded in adding quite substantially to its ranks. Its activities are generally organized in a thorough manner, particularly centering in the trade union field. Just now it is renewing its efforts to put more active life into the local railroad council to organize a fight against the pending wage cuts.

Excellent Meeting in Chicago
The Chicago Left Opposition branch made one important step forward in acquiring permanent headquarters. It has become a place full of life, meetings and study classes take place regularly and generally speaking, quite successfully. For our tour, one public meeting was held at the headquarters and one

in the down town section. The latter proved highly successful. It attracted a good-sized audience and brought out so many questions which in sum and substance amounted to almost a full review of the Left Opposition platform.

This branch has some recent gains to its credit, particularly among young workers. Those comrades who a short time ago were expelled from the Y. C. L. because of their fight against the system of bureaucracy have continued their logical development and adhered to the Left Opposition platform. They are now active members of the Chicago branch, comrade Satir is already busily engaged teaching other young workers. While there have been periods of a certain let-down in active work carried on by this branch in the past, its future prospects of steady growth are already quite well assured.

Winding Up in the East
In the Eastern section, we held public meetings in Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Youngstown. In the latter city we will henceforth have a functioning branch. It begins its activity with small numbers, but that is no deterrent; it has been the history of our whole movement including those branches which are today very lively. In Cleveland we have also taken steps toward the formation of a branch. When we reach the point of recording the gain of a few young recruits in that city, a live existence will be assured.

The efforts made by the little party bureaucrats in Pittsburgh, to break up our meeting and by similar individuals in Youngstown to create friction, our readers already know, came to naught in a rather inglorious fashion. In all of the meetings there was a good sprinkling of party members present, at several instances asking questions and participating in the discussion. Throughout the tour good collections were made to aid us in further activities. As one example in this respect, we might mention that from seven comrades alone, in Boston a total contribution of \$50.00 was made.

All in all the tour brought splendid results. First, in again bringing forward in public meetings the Left Opposition views of problems of the class struggle. Secondly, in strengthening our branches everywhere and lastly, but perhaps foremost, in knitting our organization as a whole more closely together.

—ARNE SWABECK.

A Set-back for Stalinism . . .

On Jan. 18, I was asked by my Local Union to give a report on the Marine Workers' Defense Committee. At once the chief leader of the T. U. U. L. took the floor and made a motion that my report be delayed. His reasons were: that their delegate was not present and from what information they had so far, the committee should be withdrawn. He was followed by one of his lieutenants who also spoke in favor of withdrawing from the Committee. I was granted the floor next. I explained, that since their delegate had only attended one of the three meetings, he could not give much of a report, and that I was asked by the Committee because of his absence and lack of interest to have the L. U. send another delegate in his place. Therefore I urged that action be taken immediately. The membership which is now familiar with the case, became uneasy. They could not understand the dishonest maneuver of these two would-be revolutionary leaders of the T. U. U. L., refused to entertain the amendment of the chair was demanded. The vote was taken and guess what happened—out of about a hundred and twenty-five (125) members, about eighteen (18) belonging to the T. U. U. L. eighty-eight (88) voted for hearing the report immediately and five (5) voted to postpone it. I must say that I can hardly find words to express my gratitude to those members of the T. U. U. L. whom their conviction forbade to raise their hand with the five (5) allies of the hangman. We also owe a certain amount of respect to those members who claim they are not familiar with the case. Yet as workers, rather than to throw their lot in with the hangman they abstained. Now came my report. In order to clear up some of the misunderstanding, I had to quote the statement from the *Daily Worker* mentioned in some of the T. U. U. L. members' protest. They were ashamed of their own quotation. I stressed the work of the Defense Committee and also read of the letter from the L. L. D., in which they now offer to defend the Marine Workers.

I did not even have to re-appear when some members motioned "Brother chairman, I make a motion to donate them another fifteen dollars and to substitute the one delegate".

The chairman again refused to entertain the motion. Instead he picked up the constitution and started, "In the name of . . . I declare this meeting adjourned." No sooner had he finished when two members had jumped on the

Resurgence of Mine Struggles

Miners Learning, Gathering Forces for Coming Fight

Reports from the mine fields tell of a reestablishment of the influence of the U. M. W. A. in recent months. This organization, controlled to the point of strangulation by the abominable Lewis machine for years was considered to be on its last legs only a short time ago. Due to the splitting up of the advanced militants among the miners, the Stalinists allowing the "progressive" fakers a free hand by their narrow and bureaucratically limited policy, the U. M. W. A. because of its job control is being looked upon by many miners as the only organization left for them.

The new influx of membership into the union will undoubtedly revive the Left wing within it and open up real possibilities for militant action among the miners on a nation-wide scale. In view of all these developments and in view of the approaching international convention of the U. M. W. A., the article by comrade Allard published below is especially interesting and important. More articles by the same comrade and by other comrades in the mine fields will follow. —Ed.

The district convention of the U. M. W. A. was held soon after the rank and file movement in Illinois had been decisively defeated by the Lewis-Walker-Op-

platform and tried to take the gavel away from him to reopen the meeting.

A free-for-all was in full swing and in ten minutes another "third period" had taken place. Casualties were as follows: compound fractures of two chairs and three tables legs, a few minor scull bruises. The peace treaty is set for January 21. And now a few words on the chairman. He helped to "make history" for our L. U. He placed upon it the blackest spot of any of his forerunners. Never in its darkest days had a chairman of this Local taken such action. And now, to prevent any such recurrences we have to recall him and elect a new chairman at our next meeting. He fought the T. U. U. L. whose battle he should, and who supported him in exercising his "legal" rights under his constitution to adjourn the meeting, feel that we are doing them and the workers in their camp an injustice by this more they can again exercise their legal rights, by appealing to the District Council or General President Hutcheson!

—W. H. H.

erators and Department of Justice combination. Scores of plain and simple unionists had been rounded up and jailed because of their so-called "sympathies" with the Communists. It is a fact that the rank and file movement wanted the alliance of the Communists but the official party bluntly refused, condemning the movement as a betrayal. It was several weeks before the anger of the rank and file could be overcome and gradually we were able to convince the miners that there was a difference between the "Communism" of the official party and the "Communism" of the opposition. The result is that today the miners know a great deal more of "Trotskyism" and its differences with the false teachings of Stalinism. If we were not able to make greater organizational gains in the struggle it was because of the numerical weakness and the difficulties of going out among the "raw material" and showing them the differences between the factions. This problem, I assume, is universal. But still, it is a bigger problem among the American workers, due to their political backwardness.

Causes for Retreat
We may summarize the struggles of the Illinois miners under the leadership of the rank and file, their weaknesses and failure to capture the union, as follows:

1. The rank and file leadership was weak in understanding the most elementary problems of the working class—therefore it was virtually without a program.
2. Hordes of opportunists, disgruntled fakers, swarmed into the movement contaminating the healthy proletarian base, to see our party controlled by elements that do not understand the need of united action under the circumstances.
3. The combination of the reactionary forces of the U. M. W. A., the bosses and their government. These forces drove back into "line" nearly 35,000 miners who had through their local unions endorsed the rank and file office.
4. The official party's hostility and stubbornness in demanding the unconditional control of the rank and file movement. The party refused to be a minority. Of course, this is the general program of the T. U. U. L. and there is nothing new in the outrageous manner they gave help to the enemies of the Illinois miners. To me, this was the most tragic experiment in the labor movement.

The present situation in Illinois is surely heading toward another movement that will be fought bitterly. The contract expires March 31, 1932. The Illinois district represents the last semblance of absolute job control in any mining field in the country. We last gave by saying that it is the last section of the American unskilled working class that has job control. The union is at stake. The miners' organization in this state will not be fighting for better conditions, nor to hold what it has, but it will fight for its very rights to exist as a union. The leadership of the union surely is not very much concerned, as most of the present staff have accumulated wealth and are "independent".

Conditions are horrible. The plight of the American working class is well felt by every revolutionist. There is no need to dwell on that here. It is highly significant, however, to point out the fact that the national government in a public statement says that the American Red Cross has changed its policies relating "to an act of God" and is "appropriating" money to aid the bituminous miners. The State Committee on unemployment also emphasizes the "dire need of the bituminous coal miners". This is not an accident or an unrelated incident. Whether the coal miners' conditions are worse than those of the rest of the American working class is not the question that concerns the capitalist class. It is of supreme importance, however, that the coal miners have a strong tradition of struggle. And since the Wall Street crash and even prior to that time, some section or other of the industry has at one time or another been involved in bloody guerrilla warfare. That is the dynamite that strikes fear into their hearts.

The Miners' Educational Leagues
In Franklin County, over 20 local unions are affiliated to a Franklin County Miners' Educational League. This is a duplicate of the Staunton Sub-district organization. It holds meetings regularly in various mining towns every Sunday. The benefit of this organization is great. The topics are always of interest to the miners. The thinking of the miners is stimulated and raised to a higher level. The tolerance towards Communists is excellent and every form of political philosophy is permitted expression. This minority right is in line with our program and is receiving great sympathy throughout the whole union. A general Left wing program has been adopted to present before the international convention. Resolutions on the Soviet Union Criminal Syndicalism, Unemployment Restriction of length of time in office abolition of the International Executive Board, numerous revisions of the constitution such as that reading "share of our products" to "the full social value of our products", etc., etc. are some of the things the Educational Leagues have adopted and sworn to fight for in the International gathering. This Left trend has been brought about due to the prevailing conditions, naturally, but also by the great pressure of Left Opposition comrades and other class conscious militants in the field.

—GERRY ALLARD.

ON THE QUESTION OF THE STATE

A comrade from Bethlehem writes to the Militant that Communists, sympathizers and Left wingers still inquire on the attitude of the Communists toward the question of the State. They further ask what is the position of the Left Communists. The comrade inquires: "Is the aim of the Communists, after a successful proletarian revolution, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, to continue to build a State?"

In reply to the comrade, it can be stated that the views of the Communists relative to the State, or government, are definite and specific. The early and modern leaders of scientific socialism or communism have answered clearly all that is involved therein. The first to do so were Marx and Engels in their historic "Socialism—Utopian and Scientific" work, which comprises a section of his larger work, "Landmarks of Scientific Socialism (Anti-Duhring)".

Class Society and the State

The Communists see in the State an organ of domination of one class in society over another. Till the advent of power by the proletariat in the Soviet Union, the State had always been an instrument of power of a ruling and exploiting class over the mass of exploited people. This has been the situation in all preceding class societies: slavery, feudalism and today capitalism. Modern capitalism in its stages of growth, and largely even yet, expresses itself through the parliamentary—allegedly through the methods of "universal" suffrage—form of government. But already, in its imperialist epoch and its decadence or decline on an international scale—it is resorting to another form of fascist dictatorship, which, among other things, shows more plainly the bankruptcy of the economy of capitalism today and compels it to resort to special repressive forms to maintain, somehow, capitalist domination.

The Communists understand that the State is but the outgrowth of the existing social and class relations which arise out of the conditions of production and distribution of the means of existence. This is so under the Soviets in the period of the proletarian dictatorship, no even as in capitalist society itself. No Communist desires a State or repressive organ for its own sake. But unlike the Anarchists and Syndicalists, they know that the mere denial or negation of the State and its role, does not do away with it.

The Proletarian State

The Proletarian State, the Soviet Union, too, is an apparatus of one class against another. The proletariat has succeeded the bourgeoisie as the ruling class, and, in alliance with the peasantry there, protects the interests of the useful producers and endeavors to eliminate all forms of exploitation and exploiters. Soviet rule is the highest form of democratic procedure yet developed. It is not a parliamentary form, after the manner of capitalism but, in the main,

an industrial form or the political expression of the masses.

The dictatorship of the proletariat, in Russia in the form of a Soviet Government—Workers' Councils—represents the transition form between capitalist society and the final establishment of classless—hence governmentless—society, that is: Communism. The Soviet state strives for the complete elimination of all forms of capitalism and capitalist petty or large. At the same time, as one of its outstanding achievements, the Soviet government achieves in the establishment of the social and economic functions of the working masses. So long as classes in one form or another exist, a governmental apparatus or State will exist. Its final elimination or dissolution can only be the result of a long process in which the useful producers—workers of brain and muscle—finally establish all the necessary bases of social production and distribution, without any kind of exploiting factors or remnants, and thereby develop a condition wherein no form of governmental apparatus is required. In other words, to paraphrase Marx and Engels, the administration of men (government) is to be replaced by the administration of things, that is, the administration of the processes of production and distribution or the establishment of a social and industrial commonwealth in which political government, as we understand it now, becomes wholly unnecessary. Society will function through social and industrial forms. On this question Daniel De Leon, the American revolutionist, has made great contributions which have been attested to by Lenin.

Regarding the gradual elimination of the State, Engels has described the process as a withering away or vanishing of the State. Our readers can find voluminous material on this and kindred questions in Lenin's brilliant work, "State and Revolution", Trotsky's "Terrorism and Communism", Marx's "Criticism of the Gotha Program" and other works. The point of view of the Left Opposition is amply expressed therein.

The Soviet Government Today

There remains nevertheless the situation in the Soviet Union today. That Stalin and Stalinism have to a large degree converted the Soviet apparatus into a bureaucracy which less and less represents the basic historical interests of the proletariat, does not do away with the fundamental fact of the necessity for the proletariat to create a State, a Soviet government, for its own ends. Stalinism has abused the proletarian democracy in the Communist party, in the Soviet government, in the unions, etc., but despite the terrible abuses, despite the usurpation of powers by the bureaucracy,—the Soviet government remains a WORKERS' STATE. Despite all that happened, the Left Opposition has full faith in the regeneration of the Communist party of the Soviet Union and the Communist International. The vigilance and understanding of the worker-Communists and proletariat, led by the

Meetings in the Mine Field

Naturally we presented this criticism at our meeting in Staunton, Ill. Present were the party organizer in the mine fields with some of the party members. In the discussion they had very little to say about this question, the organizer had something else in mind. He asked the direct question: "Do you support the hunger march to Washington?" The answer was in the affirmative. He then, after first voicing his agreement with our general analysis of the capitalist crisis, attempted to prove that our position was the opposite. In support of this contention, he quoted the following from our open letter to the party on the unemployment question: "It is false to center the unemployment program, and the activities and demonstrations, around the deceptive opportunist petition campaign to Congress . . ." For us it became quite easy to verify, not only that this was still as correct as when written, but also that the hunger marches themselves declared that they did not come to congress to present petitions but to make definite demands. Our audience present voiced no doubt of our further statement that the workers will obtain only what they are ready to fight for.

St. Louis Crowd Responsive

The city of St. Louis has very little of a revolutionary movement or of Communist activities. Naturally our Left Opposition branch there is small. Still, a splendid meeting gathered for our meeting. In fact we were greeted by the hearty applause of a typical American audience composed of workers who

Left Opposition in Appeal to Needle Trade Workers

(Continued from page 1)
start again a movement for unity. If the Right wing will reject our plea, if the Right wing will refuse a conference for a united strike, then all the dressmakers will know whom to blame for the division in our ranks. We will then proclaim louder than ever: The Right wing bureaucrats DO NOT WANT UNITY with the Industrial Union which represents the most militant section of the dressmakers. Both unions must be recognized as bona-fide organizations. On this basis.

- We propose that:
1. The N. T. I. W. U. should send a letter immediately to the Joint Board of the I. L. G. W. U. proposing a conference to draw up demands and to elect a General Strike Committee, representative of both unions, each union reserving the right for freedom of criticism.
 2. This letter to be printed in thousands of leaflets in a number of languages to be distributed among the wide masses of the dressmakers with a call to them to force the officialdom of the I. L. G. W. U. to accept our proposals.
 3. A joint shop conference to follow which would definitely consider and sanction all conference proceedings and decisions.
 4. A huge Joint Organization Committee to be organized of both unions with every worker who is ready and willing to help eligible to participate in the

work and activities of the Organization Committee.

The publicity and propaganda about the demands must be spread far and wide. The deep-going crisis, the mistakes of the N. T. W. L. U., and the hand-in-glove work of the I. L. G. W. U. with the bosses, dampened the fighting spirit of the dressmakers. This spirit must be revived! The bosses must feel long before the strike begins that they will not succeed in cutting off another slice from the meager earnings of the dressmakers. A united struggle against the bosses will again bring to the forefront the rebellious fighting power and hatred of the workers against their class enemy.

The Left wing cannot wait any longer. THE LEFT WING MUST ACT, if it wants to retain the confidence and loyalty of the worker dressmakers! Now is the time to lay the foundation for one union in the trade. A Joint Conference for a united strike of the dressmakers is a real beginning for final fusion of both unions—into one.

ON WITH A UNITED STRUGGLE AGAINST THE BOSSES—AGAINST DIVISION IN OUR RANKS—AGAINST CLASS-COOPERATION POLICIES. For better conditions—for a fighting Union of all needle trades workers.

(Signed)
Needle Trades Workers,
Members of the Communist League of America (Opposition)