

WORKERS  
OF THE  
WORLD.  
UNITE

# THE MILITANT



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Around the 'Recovery'

## How the Boss Class Receives the N.I.R.A.

The Industrial Recovery Act marks a further step in the Europeanization of American economy, through its close coordination of industries for the purpose of establishing fixed policies as to prices, wages, production, sales methods, etc.; its foundation in class collaboration between industry so coordinated and the reformist trade unions; and the drawing-in of the state authority into an intimate supervision of the whole process of coordination and collaboration. France of the Third Republic, Germany under the Weimar constitution and even under the Kaiser, afforded much closer parallels to the "new deal" than Hitler's Germany or Mussolini's Italy.

Of course, it is a little hard for some of the "rugged individualists" to get used to the idea of exerting their influence over the industry through a trade association, instead of the "free competition" to which they are accustomed, and to solve their labor problems in collaboration with the Greens, the Wolls and the Lewises, instead of by the police club. Some of them have not yet understood that according to the presidential edict their highest aim in life is to provide "purchasing power" and to keep factories going—they keep thinking of profits and wondering if the Great White Father at Washington understands what business is all about. Many of them, on the other hand, have been quick to grasp the new idea, and the Standard Oil interests do not hesitate to put the power to fix prices and to allocate production right in the hands of the president. They understand that "purchasing power of labor," as carried out by a president who sets a wage scale of \$1 a day for the reforestation workers, who cuts the veterans' pensions and the salaries of the Federal employees, is something that will not interfere with profits.

The first few weeks of the N.R.A. show however that this transition from the old methods of dealing with the workers, with the fist, to the new methods, with the outstretched hand, has not yet been fully made. All the codes have to repeat the statements of the act about the right of collective bargaining, the workers' freedom from compulsion to join company unions, and the willingness of the manufacturers to comply with the regulations about hours and wages.

An analysis of the actual codes submitted, particularly by the larger industries, shows that the bosses want to keep their hands free in dealing with labor. The steel industry was the most outspoken, declaring that the form of employee representation which it has had for years, an empty and formal ceremony, does not need to be changed to fit into the "collective bargaining" required by the act. This is not even a company union, but to take no chances, a number of steel companies have been organizing company unions as well. So have many coal operators, even in Kentucky. In any event, they know that they can "ways deal with the A. F. L. fakes," who are the only representatives of labor recognized by the government. The A. F. L. is putting on a terrific organization drive, putting hundreds of organizers into the field, and reaching basic industries like steel, automobiles, etc., which have been closed to them up to now.

On the vital question of wages, the first few codes prepared so far show the same effort to seem to be doing something for the worker, while in reality making as few concessions as possible. The minimum wage provisions are in reality meaningless; in the first place, they apply only to one class of labor, the lowest paid, and even here they can be and will be evaded by classifying workers as "learners and apprentices" who can then be paid less than the alleged "minimum" wage. Second, the rates are figured by the week or the hour, while the real living standard of a worker is measured by his wages over the period of a year. Third, contrary to the government's promises, nothing has been put into the codes to prevent still further speeding-up so as to make it possible for employers to fire many workers, get the same volume of production out of those remaining, and thus keep their total wages paid unchanged, even while paying a higher rate per hour or per week. Fourth, if piece-work rates are permitted, what becomes of the minimum wage? Even the president had to recognize that the textile code was too raw in this respect, and to make the deal look plausible to the workers he had a statement inserted that hourly rates were not to be changed to piece-work rates in the effort to defeat the purposes of the code.

The provisions as to hours are also being left open to all kinds of juggling in the codes submitted so far. Not a single one of them guarantees a minimum number of hours or weeks of work in a year, as well as a maximum, which would be a concession in so far as it would set the year's earnings, not the week's or the hour's, as a standard. The provision for forty hours a week introduced by the textile code have been taken as a minimum, and the lumber code even provides for a forty-eight hour week. The Roosevelt enthusiasm for the thirty-hour week was once reflected in the Black Bill and in the provision that work on the new navy ships for which bids will be opened shortly must be on a thirty-hour weekly basis. Now it seems to have vanished.

Instead, there are a number of provisions whereby work can be piled up for a certain period, running as high as six months in some cases, far above the so-called "maximum" hours of the code, on the pretext that the industry is continuous, as claimed by the steel and the rayon employers.

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## WAVE OF 'RECOVERY' STRIKES!

Breaking through the class collaboration net of the NIRA workers from California to New York are striking against starvation wages and slave conditions.

**Reading Hosiery Workers**  
In Reading, Pa., the entire working class population rallied to the support of the striking Hosiery Workers in a splendid demonstration of solidarity. Jails, clubbings and gas bombs while exposing the mailed fist behind the "Raw Deal"

### Organize Strike Among Mirror Makers

New York, N. Y.—A marvel of organizational effort was achieved recently by a number of young workers in the mirror novelty line, a branch of the pocketbook and ladies handbag industry.

The mirror novelty line is not a large one. Nevertheless it consists of some ten or twelve shops employing 70 or 80 workers, boys and girls, coverers, pasters, tippers, etc. who are the most exploited of the semi-skilled section of the working class. The industry was entirely neglected by the various factions in the labor movement. Although the Trade Union Unity League has at

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have not weakened the spirit of the Reading strikers.

**Hollywood Movie Workers**  
America's third largest industry—Hollywood Film Industry—is crippled by a strike of 665 sound engineers supported by a sympathetic strike of 5,000 other workers. They demand shorter hours and increased wages.

**Meat Packers in Omaha**  
Meat packers in Omaha, granite workers in California, furniture workers and food workers in New York are engaged in militant strikes.

**Uniform Makers in N. Y.**  
In Red Bank, N. J., workers employed in the making of police and army uniforms have joined the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and are striking against the wages proposed by the NIRA Code.

In isolated shops, towns and trades innumerable other strikes are taking place. Some are led by

## Gen'l Strike in Furniture Trade of N.Y.

New York, N. Y.—Four thousand upholsterers were called out last Thursday, July 27th on a general strike of the industry. The call was issued at the Manhattan Lyceum by the Executive Committee of Local 76 of the American Federation of Labor at a strike meeting of over 800 sitting under banners of 42 of the largest shops of greater New York. Demonstrations of enthusiasm and spirit swept the hall at the proposal of the chairman, Brother Albert, for a general strike in the morning for the basic demands of the 39 hour week and the minimum scale of \$1.40 per hour. Irving Plaza, headquarters of the strike, was packed this morning with the first day's response to the call. Committees were organized to cover every shop in the city down to and including the one and two man shops. Preparations are under way for a kitchen to feed the strikers. All indications point towards a militant and determined fight to unionize the trade.

**Left Wing Joins Strike**  
Caught completely unprepared by the general strike call, the party fraction of the Furniture Workers' Industrial Union met hastily last night, and without consulting the membership of the union, also called a "general strike" of the four or five shops over which it has "control". In contrast to the A. F. L., their demands are for the 40 hour week and for the \$1 per hour basic wage. This is the culmination of the weak and confused "united front from below" policy against which the Left wing group has struggled over a period of months.

Two days ago, at a meeting of five shops called by the Industrial Union, the mask of unity behind which the Party bureaucrats had been hiding, was torn from their faces when they answered the demand for merging the rival unions with a "decision" from above that the Industrial Union will be maintained at all costs. For months the

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the A. F. L.—a scanty few by T. U. L. organizations but generally they are spontaneous struggles without organized leadership.

The splitting tactics of the A. F. of L. bureaucrats, and the sectarian course of the Stalinists have together served to throttle the possibility of a real united struggle of all workers capable of smashing the slave NIRA codes and winning the five-day week and the six-hour day with increased pay.

### Pocketbook Workers Win Conditions

New York.—At a mass meeting in Webster Hall, the Pocketbook workers heard a report of their manager Stein, that an agreement was reached with the Industrial Council of the Leather Goods Employers Association. After the manager's report a lengthy discussion took place for and against accepting the agreement. The majority of the workers listening to the heated discussion decided to accept the agreement with a majority vote.

It was the Left wing that made the fight to continue the strike until the bosses will grant all the demands.

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## Roosevelt's Radio Speech Asks for Class «Peace»

The significance of Roosevelt's speech last Monday night cannot be overestimated. It constitutes a historical milestone in the downward development of world capitalism. It foreshadows the whole course of the American bourgeoisie in the coming period, both at home and abroad.

talism which is not unsimilar to the benevolent despotism of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth century kings.

The idea of "benevolent" retrenchment of the ruling classes is reshaped in a new form, with the oppressed classes standing to gain even less than in the past; the part of the "despot" still sharper, that of "benevolence" even more shallow.

What is the particular "human" agency Mr. Roosevelt refers to? It is the so-called blanket code, proposed by the "National Recovery Administration". What are the "economic ills" this agency is to remedy? They constitute the organizational backwardness of American capitalism in relation to its outstandingly predominant position on the world market.

How will the support which the president calls for in regard to the code accomplish the task he sets himself?

## St. Louis—Hotbed of Strikes Shoe Workers Rebel in Strike Without 'Leaders'

St. Louis, Mo.—Six months ago the majority of St. Louis working class tongues were wig-wagging: "Just wait till the breweries open up." Every other worker tempered his impatience to enjoy a decent standard of living with the rose-colored vision of the "good old days". To-day every worker knows from bitter experience that even 99 percent beer in 2 for 5c steins could not solve our situation—that of 17,000,000 unemployed starving because of "over-production".

Rising prices have stimulated production, temporarily at least, in certain of the local industries: Clothing, shoes, boxes, etc. The increased cost of living has driven the St. Louis workers forward to union organization and to militant strikes for higher wages, shorter hours, etc.

The local AFL organization committee has organized over 3,000 workers into their various craft unions within a relatively short period of time, printers, shoe-workers, metal-trades workers, clothing, etc. The Needle Trades Workers' Industrial Union seems to have passed out of existence.

The International Ladies Garment Workers' Union, within four weeks time, has a rapidly growing membership that will soon have the mass of shops in St. Louis organized. This is an important achievement, even though the ILGWU is a Right wing union, when one considers that the St. Louis needle trades have been notoriously open shop for many years. Already many of the smaller factories are organized 100 percent; and inroads are being made on the larger clothing companies.

The count-em-on-your-hand membership of the sectarian NTWIU has, correctly, individually joined

the ILGWU. Efforts are being made by the L. O. to organize a Left wing bloc inside of the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union, with the cooperation of the Stalinists. A mutually agreed upon Left wing slate has been tentatively accepted and is going to be fought for at the coming union elections.

The organization campaign has forced the larger shops to make gestures of NIRA liberality to their employees—concessions to stay the workers' enthusiasm for union organization. Ely and Walker, for example, increased the wages of their 2500 workers an average of 11 percent just last week; following a 10 percent increase granted a short time previously. These "free will" wage increases naturally only make up for a small part of the reductions of the past three years.

Minor strikes, medium strikes, monster strikes—all sizes in various industries concretize James P. Cannon's words at his last months' lecture here—"the next period of American business will usher in a reign of strikes, strikes on a larger scale, a change in the psychology of the working class and an increasing interest in revolution."

The temporary spur to production, due to inflation, has ushered in a wave of both spontaneous and planned strikes in the proverbial open shop town of St. Louis.

The minor strikes include: Restaurant workers at a fashionable night club organize and picket for higher wages; the socially acceptable lorgnette hostess believing their labor to be worth only \$4.00 a week. The butchers toddle over the sidewalks of St. Louis demanding union recognition.

The Food Workers' Industrial Union, which recently gained wage increases of approximately 100 percent in four Funsten Nut Companies, conducted another successful strike at Hoffman Bros. Nut Company. Mass picketing meant mass arrests, militancy meant police clubbings, but the solidarity of the militant nut pickers became the talk of the town. After fizzled attempts to use scabs, Hoffman was forced to accede to the wage demands of the nut pickers. 90c for picking a 25 lb. box of pecans is not a high wage by any method of computation, but it will nevertheless result in nearly 100 percent increased pay checks.

The Left Opposition offered organizational aid to the nut and rag company strikers, saying that we were ready to help in any way we possibly could. The rank and file Stalinists were naturally pleased at the offer of support. One, Al Rosener, promised to meet the writer and come with a plan for utilizing our help. But, poor chap, he promised before looking up to those who were looking down. The bureaucrats stopped holding their noses and thumbed-down the whole "counter-revolutionary" proposal.

Rag-pickers striking at G. Mathes and at Aaron Fere and Sons have been on the picket line for over two weeks. Mass arrests, brutal police clubbings, the determination of the \$3.00 a week "rag-pickers" to win or die, has finally forced the democratic mayor to appoint an "investigating" committee. The committee reported back, recommending no discrimination in matter of wages to white and colored, doing same work, and wage in-

Of the workers he only demands that they "go along with us." In this field he is not so sure. For what achievements can he boast of here? The miserable conservation camps, with their forced labor and their \$1 a day wage slavery? This is not very likely to impress the workers. In the meantime, strikes of all sizes and amplitudes sweep the country. It is necessary for the capitalist strategist to go easy with the workers. They are in no mood for fanfares.

He merely pleads with the workers "that no aggression is now necessary to attain those (the workers') rights". He merely assures them that "nobody will be permitted to whittle...away" the rights which they have not got.

He prefers to wait and see how the workers will fall for the gag of the stagger system and the minimum wage—which every capitalist will have no trouble to transform into the maximum wage.

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## New Boss Attacks in Britain Militant Strikes Mark Beginning of Workers' Resistance

Edinburgh, Scotland.—The British capitalist class is in an aggressive mood. Despite the pious protests of the parliamentary Labor Party, a scheme for the reorganization of the police force upon a military basis is now well advanced and middle class youth are being specially trained at Cadet schools for service as police officers. At the same time the number of special constables will be increased and the strength of the force raised to fifty thousand men under the supervision of the reactionary Lord Trenchard, now Commissioner of Police.

Along with this new police organization comes news of a new Unemployment Insurance Act, the outcome of the labors of several government commissions. According to semi-official statements made in the government press, the new act will contain at least one drastic change in the administration of unemployment benefit, namely, a scheme for the conscription of labor. At the present time, the majority of unemployed persons have exhausted their ordinary benefit and are now receiving transitional or temporary payments provided they can satisfy the authorities that they have no other means of maintenance.

**Unemployed Conscribed**  
Under the new act these persons would only receive benefit provided they are prepared to enroll at special work centers to be organized by the state. The state would then undertake to train the unemployed in handicrafts, trades and physical culture at a cost of 4 million pounds. The two schemes, reorganization of the police and organization of conscript labor, dovetail admirably into each other and in the event of any emergency, such as large-scale strikes or working class demonstrations, the state will have at its disposal a militarized police force and also an army of coerced strike breakers calculated to smash any form of working class resistance.

The British ruling class is looking far ahead and with a duplicity in the art of statecraft they seek to screen their intentions behind a mock attack upon German Fascism. They have backed up the protest of Lansbury and the Labor party against Hitler with their own protests mouthed by the jingo Churchill and Chamberlain. The latter pair suggest that Fascism will never find a place in Britain as a system of government and indeed, at the present time, there seems no need of any great change in the traditional method of parliamentary democracy.

**Cowardly Document of Labor Party**  
But this is only a superficial view of things and only the unwary could imagine that Britain can escape the Fascist tidal wave that is sweeping Europe. No doubt the method of introduction will be peculiarly British, the mailed fist concealed in the velvet glove, but the dreams of a parliamentary majority still being indulged in by the leaders of the Labor party seem to be rudely shattered. At any rate, their recent manifesto denouncing both Communism and Fascism in favor of parliamentary democracy will go down in history as one of the most cowardly and hypocritical documents ever issued by a group of so-called leaders of a highly developed working class. They claim to be preparing for another term of

Labor government while the capitalist class claim to have cleared the decks for a period of tranquil government under the Ramsey MacDonald administration. But if democracy is still to be the order of the day, then why disclaim against Fascism? And if a period of peaceful progress lies ahead then why reorganize the state machine and conscript labor upon the Fascist model?

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## THE N.I.R.A. - SUMMED UP

The decay of world capitalism is the condition that prepared the foundation for the Industrial Recovery Act.

The Industrial Recovery Act can be summed up as follows:

1. It is an attempt to prop up a tottering and decaying capitalist system.
2. It is an attempt to organize production; instead it will enlarge all of the basic contradictions.
3. It is an attempt to regulate competition; instead it will intensify competition.
4. It has the elements of state capitalism.
5. The defeat of the German working class by Fascism has caused a political regrouping in world politics and has accelerated the American imperialists' attempt to reorganize the internal economic forces in preparation for more effective international struggles and for war.
6. It reveals to a greater extent the true role of the state as an instrument of suppression for the dominating class. The partnership of government and industry is not new. Only the form of a relationship is changing, from a concealed to a more open form.
7. It will organize Cartels through government aid.
8. It will result in a government subsidy to the big capitalists and the "sick" industries and is part of the plan to raise the price level of commodities.
9. It is a method of eliminating

the small producers.

10. The establishment of the codes and the minimum wage for each industry, suitable for the big capitalists with large constant capital, modern methods of production and a high degree of exploitation, will eliminate the small producers who cannot live up to the new form of competition.

11. The right to curtail production through the code agreements is a weapon in the hands of the big capitalists against the small producers.

12. It will result in a lower standard of living for the American workers.

13. Speed up and rationalization will be intensified.

14. The real wages of the working class will be reduced regardless of what the money wage may be.

15. It will establish a low minimum wage which will become the average and then the maximum.

16. The reduction of hours as presented by the code is the stagger plan.

The 30 hour week is a denial of and a caricature of the six hour day and five day week.

17. It will establish a check collaboration machinery to hold in check the working class. Arbitration will be established for every industry.

18. It is an attempt to head off the class upheavals in the near future.

19. It is an attempt to prevent strikes. It will outlaw strikes. Strikes will be against the bosses'

government. The capitalists will hide behind the American flag to a far greater degree.

20. The code makes provisions for a money wage increase of from 5 percent to 10 percent to prevent strikes due to the rapid rise in commodity prices.

21. The workers' "rights" under the code only begin after the employees threaten to repudiate the employers' slave codes—then the capitalists and their government will resort to arbitration to prevent strikes.

22. It is an attempt to side-step the dole and social insurance, absorbing some of the unemployed through the stagger plan and by the inauguration of a public works program for the benefits of the contractors' and capitalists' profits, to employ some of the unemployed for the equivalent of relief.

23. It is an attempt to prevent the establishment of class struggle unions and instead to maintain the status-quo, or to establish Company Unions—or safe conservative unions such as the A. F. L.

24. It is an attempt to reorganize the surplus labor power to the high productive forces of American industries.

25. The Industrial Recovery Act is an admission of the bankruptcy of the capitalist mode of production and is an unworkable substitute for the solution—the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist system and the establishment of a Workers' Government.

—H. O.

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