

# The N.R.A. and Trade Unions

(Continued from Page 1)

merely with the smaller section of skilled trades but with the broadest strata of the working class. It is the politically undeveloped workers, who are yet, at least to an extent, captivated by illusions of the N. R. A. who are just breaking away from their former capitalist ideology; it is these workers who are being set into motion and who are gravitating toward the unions. Their direction will inevitably be toward the conservative unions. That is already indicated in the Pennsylvania strikes. They cannot be expected as yet to take the step all the way to militant unionism, nor as yet to seek new independent forms.

Will this not imply a revival and growth of the American Federation of Labor? Undoubtedly it will. Moreover, to a certain extent it will change its basic character in that it will record an influx of proletarians from the heavy industries. What will emerge will be an A. F. of L. altered in composition and compelled to make certain organizational readjustments in order to measure up to new conditions. To a certain degree it will be compelled to give way to pressure from the ranks. Furthermore, a pressure in a militant direction will inevitably assert itself as the struggles grow and stand as a heavy counter-weight to the capitalist ideology and policy of the leadership. The continued castigation of the A. F. of L. as a company union, and conclusions drawn accordingly, as performed by the official Communist party leadership, in no way solves the problem of attitude to this union. It only adds further confusion and isolation to the militants. It will be said, and well founded upon past experience: The A. F. of L. leadership will continue its policy of betrayal, it will continue its service as labor lieutenants of capitalism. True enough, one cannot hold out any hope for a change of outlook in this respect. But betrayals have been facilitated essentially by being left unchallenged from the militants voluntarily remaining on the outside. Under such conditions the reactionary policies of the leadership remains entirely dominant over the mass movement. And, on a whole, that is just the salient fact, the leadership is still dominant in the movement and determine its ideology. The problem is to effectively challenge this leadership and infuse the mass movement with a new militant ideology and lead it to political consciousness.

This poses the old problem again before the Communist movement, but in a new and more pressing form. The place of the Communists first of all is within the mass movement. It is therefore necessary to say to the leaders of the official party that now an end must be made to the suicidal and fatal T. U. U. L. policy. It is a splitting policy. It must be substituted by a unity policy. Trade union unity is becoming the paramount issue. The opportunities for its being carried into life are at hand. No one would propose an outright liquidation of all T. U. U. L. unions in disregard of the question of relationship of forces. But the general orientation must be for unification, away from the revolutionary paper unions and for the Left wing to function within the mass movement.

The prospects are excellent for the workers struggles to deepen and broaden in the coming period.

# The Suicide of N. Skrypnik

## A Striking Revelation of the Degeneration of Stalinism

On the 7th of July, N. Skrypnik committed suicide. In 1901, Skrypnik, a student, joined the revolutionary movement and soon after became a professional revolutionary, a Bolshevik. He was exiled several times and escaped several times. He spent five years in Siberia. The official biography of Skrypnik states that he took an internationalist position at the beginning of the war and participated actively in the October Revolution. From 1920 up till his death he was Peoples Commissar in the Ukraine. He was not only a member of the Central Committee of the Soviet Union, a member of the Political Bureau of the C. P. of the Ukraine, but also a member of the E.C.C.C.I. Only a few months ago his sixteenth anniversary was solemnly celebrated in the U. S. S. R.

### Member of Stalin's Private Faction

During the entire period of the internal struggle in the party, Skrypnik together with Kaganovich, Postyshev and others belonged to Stalin's closest and most intimate faction which operated in the Ukraine and set the pace in the struggle and the repressions against the Left Opposition. Consequently this is a matter not only of one of the foremost leaders of the Soviet Union but likewise of a member of Stalin's private faction. Several weeks before Skrypnik committed suicide a campaign was carried on against him in the press. On June 10, the secretary of the Central Committee of the C. P. R., Postyshev, a careerist and one of the most obsequious of Stalin's valets, said at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Ukraine, addressing himself to Skrypnik: "The work of Ukrainization rests in the hands of all sorts of dogs. These enemies are hiding behind your big back as a member of the Political Bureau." Very little is known today of what Skrypnik said or did.

According to Postyshev, Skrypnik answered that the policy that he had carried out up till that time was correct but that the situation was now changing. To this Postyshev replied: "No, what you have done was as rotten six years ago as it is today." One has only to ask how it is that during these six years (!) none perceived or said that Skrypnik had relations with "bourgeois nationalist and anti-Soviet elements who carry 'party cards in their pocket', that, 'Skrypnik defended these foreign and hostile elements', that he hid all sorts of dogs behind his back. And all that for six whole years!

### What Is the Explanation?

The explanation of the Skrypnik case, which ended with his suicide, can only be made on the basis of the processes that are taking place in the Soviet Union and the Stalinist apparatus. Having lost the last remnants of its authority in the eyes of the masses, the Stalinist leadership is forced still further on the road of repression, of the further strangling of the party which reduces the Leninist vanguard to a soulless and formless mass of mere executors of orders. The growth of discontent and differentiation in the ranks of the party is reflected in the apparatus. The apparatus is no longer sure of itself and therefore cannot fulfill the role which Stalin sets out for it. Stalin is obliged to construct another apparatus in the cadre of this apparatus, that is, a narrow faction of loyalists. By the logic of its development the bureaucratic regime constantly undermines its own basis. For each of his mistakes Stalin sacrifices entire sections of his apparatus. They are branded as culprits, saboteurs or counter-revolutionaries.

The big as well as the small administrators pay with their heads today for Stalin's policy and mistakes of yesterday—for the leadership is "infallible". It does not suffice for him to make scapegoats of culprits in the middle apparatus, he is obliged to reach out to the members of the Central Committee and the E. C. C. I. Stalin condemned Skrypnik without taking the least trouble to furnish any evidence at all in proof of the charges made against him. They say of a member of the C. C. and the E. C. C. I.—and this is not just anyone—"bourgeois nationalist elements, shielded by their membership in the party, were taken into his confidence". That is all the explanation that is made by the C. C. The more Stalin tightens the vise, the more cracks are disclosed. Skrypnik is one of these cracks. The Stalinist machine devours its own creators. And Skrypnik who has helped not little in the creation of this machine has been caught in its toils.

### Machine Devours Creators

At the U. S. Congress Against War the Left Opposition delegates will present the revolutionary Communist program against war in contrast to the Stalinist confusionism. Lenin's teachings on this important sector of the class struggle, his conception of the united front on war and the need of American working class action against Roosevelt's war program will be raised by the Left Opposition. This will aid in the clarification of both the Communist and Socialist workers and lay the basis for a genuine common action against war and the capitalist offensive.

# Socialists Back Out of Anti-War Congress

(Continued from Page 1)

ists agreed to, or more accurately inspired—in line with the March 5, Comintern manifesto—the above statement. They have traveled far and from the policy laid down by Lenin for the Communists at the Hague anti-war conference of the Socialists and Socialists in 1922. Through the Barbusse Anti-War Congress held last August and all the subsequent "anti-war united fronts" they have blurred the line of revolutionary struggle against war in the direction of militant pacifism.

They are now appealing to the Socialist party branches to support the U. S. Congress Against War. J. R. Matthews, a member of the Socialist party who trails along with the Stalinists in its united fronts, has remained on the arrangements committee. One or two Socialist groups may support the Congress, but little more than that can be expected. The sabotage of the leaders of the Socialist party combined with the false course of the Stalinists and their anti-revolutionary position on the united front against war will result in keeping the Socialist workers for the time being, away from common action with the Communists.

At the U. S. Congress Against War the Left Opposition delegates will present the revolutionary Communist program against war in contrast to the Stalinist confusionism. Lenin's teachings on this important sector of the class struggle, his conception of the united front on war and the need of American working class action against Roosevelt's war program will be raised by the Left Opposition. This will aid in the clarification of both the Communist and Socialist workers and lay the basis for a genuine common action against war and the capitalist offensive.

—JOSEPH CARTER.

# Perspectives of the Upturn

## A Marxian Analysis of Business Cycles by L. Trotsky

(Continued from Page 1)

interrupted by the war years, has made its way in spite of all tariff walls and has proven its powerful reality in painful form. There is every reason to believe that the coming reversal of the trend, in the direction of a business revival—not simultaneously and not with equal strength—will likewise assume a world wide character. In other words, the cyclical movement of capitalism is resorted by the present crisis.

Naturally, we cannot expect full-blooded cycles in the future. In the last two decades before the war, crises had the character of short and not too profound interruptions, while each new upswing left the peak of the preceding one far below. But now we must expect the reverse; profound, long and painful crises, while the upward movements are weak and short-lived. If the old cycles were the mechanism of the broad upward movement, the new ones can only be the mechanism of capitalist decay.

Only, the influence of cyclic changes on the life of the mass of people remains enormous. In a certain sense, it is now more far reaching than ever before. The whole present status of capitalism represents a completed not merely ripe, but overripe, pre-requisite for the proletarian revolution. What lags behind is the consciousness of the proletariat, its organization, its leadership. Because of the general instability of the social equilibrium, the conjunctural fluctuations lead to enormous shifts of political power, to revolutionary and counter-revolutionary disturbances.

The bourgeois world, and with it, the social democracy awaits the new upturn in commerce and industry as a savior. The theoreticians of the Comintern are afraid of such a perspective and deny the possibility of an upward turn in

the business cycle curve. To us Marxists, it is perfectly clear that a new revival of business activity would not open a broad avenue out of the crisis, but would lead into a new, still sharper and more painful crisis. On the other hand, the inevitability of a more or less near-by change in the business cycle is perfectly evident to us. We must equip ourselves theoretically for the next "post-crisis period" and assume correct points of departure.

The years of crisis have thrown and are throwing the international proletariat back for a whole historical period. Discontent, the wish to escape poverty, hate for the exploiters and their system, all these emotions which are now being suppressed and driven inward by the frightful unemployment and governmental repression, will force their way out with redoubled energy at the first real signs of an industrial revival.

Because of the general situation of present day capital, even in the event of a substantial revival, the employers will not be in a position to make such concessions to the workers as to confine the struggle within the frame-work of the trade unions. We can predict with assurance that the industrial revival will leave no room even for a return to those conditions of labor which prevailed before the present crisis. The economic conflicts will not only take on a wide scope but also inevitably expand into political movements of a revolutionary character.

The Comintern must strip off the last remnants of the theory of the "third period" must begin to investigate concretely, the economic and social terrain of the struggle, and no longer issue commands according to its own good judgment to the proletarian vanguard but through the latter, guide the real development of the class struggle. In the very first place, the work among the trade-unions. Lozovsky's "third period" must be discarded as well as the third period of Manuilsky. Put an end to the policy of self-isolation. With the greatest sharpness must be posed the question of the restoration of the unity of the German trade union movement, through the integration of all R. G. O. members into the mass of the "free trade unions". Every party member who is able to must be obliged to join a trade union.

The development of the economic struggle will put enormous tasks before the reformist bureaucracy. The exploitation of the difficulties of the reformists can best be accomplished by a flexible and enterprising united front policy. That the Left Opposition, in spite of its small numerical strength, can be in a position to occupy an honorable place in the mass struggle is shown by the experience of the Belgian comrades. In any case, it is the task of the Left Opposition to unfold the questions clearly before the Party, to outline the general perspectives, to formulate slogans of struggle. Now, less than ever, can the Left Opposition be permitted to remain a closed propaganda group, standing aside from the real development of the class struggle.

Every Bolshevik-Leninist must be a member of one mass organization or another, above all, of a trade union. Only under this condition will our organization keep their hand on the pulse of the proletariat and fulfill their role as the vanguard of the vanguard.

—L. TROTSKY.  
Prinkipo, Aug. 13, 1932.

# N.Y. Upholsters Strike Bulletin

THREE small shops have signed up with local 76 of the A. F. of L. This is an entering wedge into the united front of the bosses' association. In spite of daily ads in the papers for scabs, for two weeks, the bosses have failed to get them. The spirit of the men is accordingly high. Plans are under way for organized relief for the strikers.

STRIKE MEDIATOR FROM WASHINGTON IS THE BUNK! Pay no attention to anyone who represents himself as such. He is here ONLY TO SELL YOU OUT like MacGrady, the NIRA representative in the Pennsylvania coal fields. To the shame of John L. Lewis and the United Workers of America, the strike was broken and the men went back at the old conditions. Don't let that happen to you! Only the workers organized into a strong union can enforce your demands.

REGULAR STRIKE MEETINGS of the shops should be held. Not merely the general meeting each day. Men from the shops must be drawn into the strike activity.

Framemakers in the union shop controlled by 1204 of the Carpenters have refused to come out in support of the general strike of framemakers called by the Furniture Workers Industrial Union. Elementary solidarity of the workers in a strike which has become general (over thirty shops involved) demands that these workers be condemned for scabbing and that they be called out in sympathy and help win conditions.

To prevent any misunderstandings, a SETTLING COMMITTEE must always accompany the officer of the union who meets with the boss for settlement. The chairman and at least one other member of the shop must be present. This rule must absolutely be adhered to or there is bound to be unsatisfactory results.

The strike needs a DAILY STRIKE BULLETIN posted in a conspicuous place in the strike meeting hall. Here all the news vital to the strike should be published. That will give correct information and pep up the men.

# Litvinov and France

(Continued from Page 1)

letter from the USSR which reveals the gravity of the economic situation. How does L'Humanite answer this?

Thus: "In spite of their wishes, Mr. P. Berland and the Temps"—striving peculiarly to oppose the recent declarations of Paul-Boncour with regard to the USSR—will not be able to prove, by these calamities, the collapse and the weakness of the Soviet regime." . . . . .

What does this phrase between the dashes signify? Hasn't the right to see here a discreet understanding with the French government concerning information on the USSR? How far will they go on this path?

We must explain to the workers that only one force is capable of helping the USSR surmount its difficulties, the organized proletariat, the Communist party. Treaties signed by the USSR are precarious portents; they will be ineffectual against imperialism's will to war! —From La Verite.

# The Development of the Los Angeles Jobless Movement and a Perspective

(Continued from last issue)

The Left wing, finding itself hampered by the predominance of especially backward elements from the county area outside of the city, took the initiative in the organization of the more progressive of the city units into their own center, the Council of City Units of the U. C. R. A. At first it was boycotted by the county organization, but in course of time it continued to develop strength, and while never formally affiliated with the County Council, it was later recognized to the extent of sending an advisory delegate to the weekly meetings of the delegates of the Executive Board of the latter. Delegates from the County Council would also visit meetings of the Executive Committee of the Council of City Units. At first only four of the city units were represented on the Left wing council, but this grew to 14 and at one time to 16.

All the progressive steps taken by the U. C. R. A. through the County Council finally agreed to demand \$20,000. Later it compromised with the city and county—the amount to be reduced to \$8,000 a month at first, and a representative of the Citizens' Committee of the Chamber of Commerce was permitted to sign all checks and thus administer the funds, although the U. C. R. A. did all the purchasing and supervised the administration of the Chamber of Commerce representative. The county also agreed to furnish gasoline and oil for the transportation of farm products from those areas where the self-help work was to be distributed by the U. C. R. A.

### Meeting the Problem of Evictions

Another problem was presented by the rapidly increasing number

of evictions, as well as shut-offs of gas, light and water. At a meeting of the Council of City Units, at which members of the County Council and the chairman of a State-wide unemployed organization (existing practically only on paper) with which the U. C. R. A. was affiliated, attended as visitors. The latter proposed that we try to legislate a bill to make evictions illegal. The Left wing elements counterposed to this the use of mass pressure, proposing to put the evicted workers back into their homes and to turn on again gas, light and water where they had been turned off. This to be done by a general mobilization of all units under the direction of the leading committee of the unit in the district where the action was to take place.

A resolution to this effect was passed, and the response was enthusiastic. At the first following eviction, over 20 units were mobilized, constituting practically all the city units, out of 65 units in the whole county. The police arrested the evicted worker on the charge of "breaking in". At the trial, several hundred members of the organization were mobilized as witnesses, and the case was handled, not as the defense of the evicted worker as an individual, but as a collective defense of the U. C. R. A. All members accepted responsibility for the action. After 150 witnesses had been heard, and costs of over \$4,500 to the county had been incurred, the evicted worker was acquitted, and the jury (composed of small property owners) made a collection of \$50 for him. In only one or two other cases was it again necessary to defend in court our mass resistance

### Turning On Gas and Light

Later we changed our tactics, and instead of putting back the furniture, roped off the streets, pitched tents (which we immediately wired for light from the overhead street lines), made fires, and mobilized our forces with bands, street dancing, singing and speech making, thereby attracting the whole neighborhood and giving our action the widest publicity. This resulted in a rush by the welfare organizations to offer housing or cash, with the promise that if our member were evicted, all we had to do was to notify them and they would either pay his rent or place him elsewhere.

We also adopted the policy of turning on gas, light and water, where they had been shut off, by committees. When the city (operating the electrical and water services) or the privately-owned gas company turned them off again, we came back and turned them on again. Where meters had been taken out, we would connect the house directly with the mains, maintaining our own plumbing shop for the purpose. We would put up a label worded as follows, "Do Not Shut Off—By Order of the Unemployed Cooperative Relief Association." These cut-offs amounted altogether to tens of thousands of cases, sometimes 50-60 in a single day. The committee consisted of the overwhelming majority of the members, who signed a pledge stating that they would continue to the end, even at the risk of arrest. Thousands of evictions were handled in the same way.

The Citizens' Committee of the Chamber of Commerce and the State, county and city authorities made frequent efforts, toward the end of 1932, to obtain a detailed registry of our membership. The Left wing consistently refused this, under the slogan of "no paperization—we are self-sufficient", and defeated these efforts.

We also drove off state intervention in the case of Pat Mays, a

former trade unionist, who committed irregularities in handling the warehouse work. We insisted that his case, and its disposition, be handled entirely by the organization, whereas the Right wing elements wanted to take it into court, and the County Council, by a vote of 43 to 3, voted to expel Mays, one of our first victories in the larger organization.

The growth of Communist sympathies during this period as vividly illustrated by the case of Ezra Chase, who was arrested while heading a committee fighting an eviction. He was charged with criminal syndicalism, and the local press began a red-baiting campaign against "Communist leadership in the unemployed movement". After four weeks of propaganda throughout the organization, we brought the question of supporting him before the County Council, and succeeded in getting a resolution passed putting the organization in back of him. The state later dropped the case.

At about this time the Left wing caucus drew up a statement addressed to all labor organizations, pointing out the need of a united front of all progressive elements on a minimum program of substantial state aid to the unemployed, insurance, and support to all workers' struggles and strikes. The Stalinists fought and defeated our proposals for the six-hour day and for long-term credits to the Soviet Union.

Because of the lack of trade union organizations in this area, the response was practically nil. One result was the organization of a broad caucus of the Communist party (which had agreed to colonize members in the U. C. R. A.), the Mustelites, and non-party Left wing elements. This group worked effectively for a period of four months, and succeeded in building up the Council of City Units into a considerable force. More units were added, vigorous mass meetings were held. Out of the new strength grew the renewal of the old demand

for \$50,000 in cash a month for relief, and a demand that emergency work be furnished through the U. C. R. A. These demands were introduced to the County Council by 23 units. At a series of mass meetings, these demands were voiced, together with demands for an increase in the supply of gasoline and oil. The policy of fighting evictions and shut-offs was re-affirmed.

The city and county administrations compromised for a total of \$30,000, the former supplying \$20,000 and the latter \$10,000 a month in cash for relief.

The party groups within the progressive council now began a series of sectarian adventures. They organized several paper organizations, one was called the Independent Organization of the Forced Labor Camps, another Organization of the Homeless Youth and a third the "County Workers' Protective Union". Following this party groups attempted to have the unemployed workers shift their allegiance from the U. C. R. A. in favor of these paper organizations. As a result of these maneuvers, the party was weakened and isolated within the general Left wing, especially as the Right wing by that time had consolidated itself into an effective working force.

After four months of collaboration within the broad Left wing caucus, the party ordered its members to withdraw. Out of about 150, some fifty to sixty remained, contrary to party orders.

A weekly newspaper was started by the Left wing in the second half of 1932, under the control of varied elements but bringing forward a class point of view. About 3,000 copies a week were circulated. While its political level reflected the backwardness of the movement in that stage, it nevertheless has been consciously endeavoring to raise this level. Its persistence was shown by the fact that, after the County Council had taken over the paper originally founded by the Left wing, the latter after a certain period again got out its own paper.

In the whole process of development of the Left wing, the Left Opposition elements played the leading role, posing the class issues, proposing concrete programs and conducting systematic propaganda for its class policies, similarly by constant visiting and speaking to the workers in the units, and above all by prolonged, systematic, direct participation in an active and leading capacity in the practical work of the movement. In general, the policies adopted were those of the Left Opposition.

The increasing influence of the Left wing over the entire U. C. R. A. is shown by a series of actions, in addition to those mentioned above and to the demonstration before the Board of Supervisors on the milk issue. Such were the resolution to support a farm hands' strike the vote of confidence in the women's milk committee, the resolution of thanks to the Communist lawyer who defended the first evictions case, the resolution against participation of bourgeois politicians in discussions. All were taken after resistance by the organized Right wing elements in the County Council.

Very important also was the work among Mexican and Negro workers who have developed a feeling of full class solidarity in the course of their participation in the movement, and the breaking down of barriers among the white workers.

### Lessons of the Los Angeles Experience

What general lessons do we draw from this experience in the light of the present perspectives as influenced by the Industrial Recovery Act?

1. We must adjust our strategy in the American labor movement to a short-term perspective, not to the long-term tasks of building a new leadership out of the youth. The State apparatus is being ever more closely intertwined with the class-collaborationist elements in the labor leadership, and first of all with the A. F. of L. The reformists are engaged in an enormous upswing,

and have been able to reach fields which they have not formerly touched for a generation or more. They report enormous organizational gains in steel, coal, textile, auto, metal mining and oil fields.

2. In such a period of upsurge of the elemental labor movement, there is enormous room for Left wing labor elements, which are badly needed for the concrete work of organization. If a cohesive Left wing is built up, and is able to work together in spite of the basic political differences; if such a Left bloc is able to entrench itself into the rising movement, it will not be possible for the Right wing leadership as has been the case before, to kick them out after their organizations are consolidated.

3. If such a policy is not followed, the class-collaborationist elements will consolidate their position and block the road to further development of the progressives, isolating them even more than is now the case.

4. The question of relation of forces within the Left wing cannot continue to be posed as it has been in the past. Confronted with the tremendous scope of the tasks to be performed, the necessity of urgent speed in view of the danger of consolidation of the Right wing, and the weak forces of the individual political groupings out of which a Left wing can be built—whether Left Oppositionists, Stalinists, Mustelites, Wobblies or Anarchists, the Left wing elements must form a united cohesive bloc in order to be effective at all. In the course of the struggle itself, the energy, militancy, and correct policies of the individual sections of the Left wing will undergo profound modifications, as will the relation of their forces.

5. The Los Angeles experience has conclusively shown that even a small group of energetic elements, with revolutionary training and basing themselves solidly on a correct policy, can be very effective and gain great influence within a broad mass movement. —M. J. ROSE.