

Political Character of Strikes Under N.I.R.A.

The NRA slave codes of the capitalist class and its effects upon the American working class have been explained in the columns of the Militant and by the Left Opposition ever since the Gillespie Trade Union Conference prior to the act becoming a law. In the meantime, we have been hammering away on the question of trade union policy in the different industries. A correct analysis of the NRA must first be presented in order to present a correct program of struggle against the new capitalist offensive. Within the ranks of the other forces of the labor movement confusion still reigns. The socialists are still fighting within their organization over the question of an analysis of the NRA. Other groups say little or nothing except that they are against the NRA. The Stalinists are also opposed to the NRA but have not answered the burning question of how to fight the NRA. In every union where they have fought the capitalist and reformer codes, the Stalinists have trailed behind them, not only in demands presented but also in many cases on the demands adopted as a law.

The capitalists projected the NRA in an attempt to solve some of the difficulties confronting them. However, the steps taken in this direction have created other contradictions. The most important of these new contradictions thrown to the surface is the one dealing with the trade unions. When the act became a law, it carried with it the outlawing of strikes as soon as the codes become finally adopted. In the meantime, an increasing number of strikes took place. These were not only a continuation of the wave of strikes just prior to the NRA as an effect of the upturn in production and increase in prices but also as a struggle for the right to organize and to bring pressure to obtain better conditions as the codes were being considered.

This wave of new strikes at the time the codes were being considered threatened to upset the NRA, especially the Penna. mines struggle. A special emergency measure was adopted. The establishment of the NRA Adjustment Board, an arbitration board to consider all strikes. The NRA outlawed strikes after the codes were adopted. The new measure outlawed strikes when the codes were being considered.

This means the workers face a new condition, a war measure condition in the trade union field. Trade union struggles of yesterday are now entirely changed—the new contradiction the capitalists themselves have created. Most of the trade union strikes of the past were listed as industrial and economic struggles and only the outstanding strikes took on a political nature of a high degree. Under the NRA EVERY STRIKE BECOMES A POLITICAL STRIKE AT THE VERY START. A strike against the capitalists is a strike against the STATE.

This brings to the surface as the most important working class question and opposition to the NRA—the workers right to strike, the right to organize. The capitalist intend to smother them in class collaboration, in arbitration and by outlawing them. The class struggle cannot be stopped this way. It can only be warped, providing the Communists are not equal to the task.

In other words, the central point of the workers struggle against the NRA revolves around the Communist answer to the trade union question. All strikes against the capitalists now are political strikes against the capitalist state.

Around the fight against the capitalists, the capitalist government and the capitalist labor agent's NRA slave code, the workers fight for the right to organize, to strike and to live, must be woven the struggle for the other demands of the class at this stage. The stagger plan must be fought by the struggle for the six hour day the five day week with increase in pay. The capitalists relief substitutes must be fought by the struggle for unemployed and social insurance. The question of long term credits to the Soviet Union and recognition of the Soviet Union as against the capitalist maneuvers on this question must be brought to the fore. The struggle of the youth to obtain a social solution and recognition for the youth denied a chance to make a living by the "abolition" of child labor.

The trade union question of the working class has now become the central point of the workers struggle against the NRA and the outlawing of strikes. Violators of the codes can be fined and imprisoned. This means strikers. This means trade unionists.

LIMITED EDITION OF "MY LIFE" ON SALE

Pioneer Publishers has recently obtained a limited number of copies of Leon Trotsky's autobiography "My Life" and is offering them for sale at the special price of \$3.00 a copy. The Publisher's price is \$5.00. Make haste and take advantage of this offer. The book can be obtained from—Pioneer Publishers, 84 East 10th Street, New York City.

AMONG THE YOUTH

L.A. Yipsel Suspended for Union Activity

The following appeal is from a militant Los Angeles Yipsel who has begun to see the reactionary nature of the leadership of the Socialist party and their youth against the Y.P.S.L. Her being expelled for class activities on the picket line makes this document more than an appeal—a warning to all revolutionaries within the socialist youth organizations as to the real drift of their leadership towards class collaboration and strike breaking. The appeal speaks for itself.—Ed.

LOS ANGELES.—TO THE MEMBERS OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIALIST LEAGUE

COMRADES:—The State Executive Committee has declared me suspended from the Young People's Socialist League without voice or vote for a period of two months pending further investigation of my activity with Communists.

Every member of the Y. P. S. L. must understand the reasons for such arbitrary actions on the part of our leadership—its basic causes and its inevitable consequences. Charges when brought down to actual facts amount to two things: my activities in the union of my trade, the Needle Trades Workers Union and participation in the United Front Anti-War Conference.

In the name of what working class principles do these "leaders" of working-class youth bring a Yipsel up on charges for belonging to the only militant union in her trade? The Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union has proved through struggle that it is a militant union fighting for it and in the interests of the working-class.

While the leadership sits back and engages in petty discussions, the cause of the workers is being consistently fought by the Needle Trades Union. Even at this time in the face of brutal police terror, manhandling of women and beating up of men on the picket line, a strike is being waged in a millinery shop under the leadership of the N. T. W. I. U.

Instead of suspending a member for being active in a strike, those members of the State Executive Committee who by their silence and inactivity have tacitly sabotaged the strike, these Yipsel "leaders" should be severely condemned.

The Y. P. S. L. leadership charges me with Anti-War activity with the Communists. Who is accused and who are the accusers? It is the thinking, serious elements in the Y.P.S.L. who must charge the leadership of the Y.P.S.L. with not participating in this United Front activity, with sabotaging this United Front, with betrayal of their class.

The "Left wing" apologizers for the leadership say, "That is all very well, but our National Executive Committee has a policy which we must follow no matter how much we are in favor of united front activity. We are a disciplined organization."

When the formal discipline of an organization clashes with the duty to the working-class something must give. The duty to the working class will win out.

Our "leadership" would gladly sidetrack the entire principled discussion into the track of barren organizational formula. The question is too big to be handled in this lawyer-like manner. It has to be handled in a working-class manner. Whether or not the National Executive Committee said this or that sinks to insignificance alongside the question of loyalty to the working-class.

I appeal to all comrades who are interested in forwarding the cause of the working-class, to protest against this anti-proletarian act of suspension.

For the Revolution, FLORENCE WYLE.

Chi. Y.C.L. Bureaucrats Expel 5 Militants

The bureaucrats of the Chicago Y. C. L. have found it necessary once again, to stem the tide of opposition which has developed amongst its members—by expulsions. This is the only answer which the statement endorsed by 6 comrades of the Y. C. L. solicited from the bureaucrats. Five Expulsions and Probations for one. The appearance of the statement which precipitated the expulsions was provoked by the German catastrophe and by the tendency on the part of the C. P. to return to its devastating policy of the united front from below which was responsible for the German disaster. The statement concerned itself with these two essential points. If the young bureaucrats expected that the German defeat and the expulsion of Albert Goldman from the C. P. would be received with silence on the part of the Y. C. L. members, it is only because they have isolated themselves so from the rank and file that they can no more gauge their sentiment. The leadership was taken by surprise when it was informed of the actions of and in violation of the no fraternization law, organized a discussion meeting at which Lydia Beidel and Albert Goldman, prominent party members, spoke and presented their position. Subsequent to this, a debate was arranged in which the Stalinists were compelled to participate. Pressed for a statement, the youth submitted a 9 page document in which they clearly formulated their position upon a number of points.

The statement is introduced by pointing out that utter confusion exists among the leadership as well as the rank and file of the Y. C. L. on the question of the united front, and Germany due to constant changes without explanation or analysis. Honesty and clarification are necessary in order to avoid a similar catastrophe. It proceeds to prove that the theory of the limited front, from below and the theory of social Fascism advanced by the leadership of the C. P. are mainly responsible for the German defeat. The C. P. must severely condemn its action in Germany and repudiate these erroneous policies. Hailing the C. I. Manifesto as a turn in the correct direction, the statement of the comrades correctly warns of the serious danger which flows from its (the manifesto's) acceptance with the Social Democrats. The document denounces the existing bureaucracy within the organization, demanding a change (free discussion, a convention, no bureaucracy, etc.) if the organization is to exist and make progress. In compliance with the demands of the "Rotten Liberalism" Act (expel immediately all who disagree) the comrades were expelled.

economic system is declining and needs fewer such servants. This means that it is no longer necessary for the youth to receive that training which was needed till now. The big industrialists and financiers do not think that physical education, junior high schools, free junior colleges and colleges are necessary or even desirable for the children of workers and poor petty bourgeoisie. In fact it is dangerous to have an army of unemployed youth who can think for themselves. They will be able to find no other outlet for their education than in radical thought. In the past, a little education to spice the dish of jingoism and chauvinism did not have bad effects for the capitalist class. Since education cannot be abolished altogether the capitalist lackeys decided to strengthen the effects of legal narcotics in education; civics and U. S. History. Then they reduced the antidotes; scientific method, mathematics, laboratory work, etc., to ineffectiveness.

Decline in Education Marks Capitalist Decay But this bill did not meet with the approval of the workers and the petty bourgeoisie of Chicago. They do not think that their children are being over-educated. The "little red school house" is an anachronism today and the workers are fighting against its re-establishment. But their protests have so far been of no avail against the Board which ignores them.

At the same time that this fight against education is conducted in Chicago, Chicago is also the scene of festivities which laud capitalist civilization and its achievements to the skies—the Century of Progress. Strangely enough this action of the Chicago school authorities is as much a part of the Fair as the machines which decorate its interior. Instead of being a blot on a perfect picture it is an indispensable part of it.

Not only have the last hundred years witnessed the growth of the machine but also it has seen the rise and early stages of the rapid decline of the capitalist system of production. Little over one hundred years ago the young and vigorous capitalism in the United States began one of the wildest rides down the rocky road of history that time has even witnessed. Today it is a decrepit, tottering centenarian, exhausted by its ride and rotting with many contradictions and diseases which its mount has helped to intensify.

The visitor to the Chicago Fair should note the showy tinsel of the Fair on the one hand and the measures for curtailing and degrading public education on the other. They are both integrally connected.

Progressive T. U. Center Disrupted by Right Wing

Some months ago the workers of the midwest states organized a Progressive Trade Union Educational Committee with headquarters at Gillespie, Illinois. The program and policy adopted was presented in the Militant some months ago. The whole Left wing with the exception of a small Right wing led by MacFarlane and Walker, secretary and chairman of the Committee.

We are now informed that a secret meeting was called by the Right wing, over the heads of, and without the knowledge of the duly elected Executive Committee. At this secret meeting the policy was ignored and a new independent "federation of labor" was established. The new organization consists of several independent crafts Teamsters, Motion Picture Operators, Painters, etc., in the small towns of the coal fields, the logical carry and break, that follows the trail of the Progressive Miners Union break with Lewis and Company.

This new craft federation comes to "life" after the NRA takes shape and the workers are flocking into the A. F. of L. where they will be at the mercy of the bosses agents, the labor fakers, unless we build a powerful Left wing.

The whole affair raises a few important questions. First, what is the position of the Right wing leadership of the PMA Percy and Keck, etc.? Now that a big section of the Right wing is ready to make amends with Lewis and Company, and do not want to be hampered by the Left wing or such a Progressive trade union committee, would it not be a wise policy on their part to wipe out the Left wing in the PMA as they are, and kill the Progressive Trade Union move by McFarlane and others kills the committee.

On the other hand—what are the Stalinists doing. The Stalinists have ideological control of the Executive Committee of the Progressive Trade Union Educational Committee. What are they going to do about this? They did not use the P.T.U.E.C. for the Cleveland Conference. Will the Stalinists allow the Progressive Trade Union Educational Committee to be killed by the Right wing? They cannot prevent the accomplished split, but they can call an executive committee and utilize the PTUEC with its correct policy as a sectional grouping of Left wingers to be connected nationally with the other Left wing bodies.

B. of E. Chooses Graft The B. of E. had two courses to choose; either curtail irretrievably the educational facilities of the Chicago schools and thus satisfy the disgruntled, childless taxpayer or follow the Strayer report and eliminate the graft which had eaten up the funds previously. In making their decision they followed the representatives of big business, the dictators of the citizens' committee, in Chicago. Graft was more favorable to them than an "educated citizen."

This fact is not so strange as it seems. The system of universal compulsory education extant today was instituted when American capitalism was expanding. It needed more trained clerks, professionals, skilled workers, etc., than our private schools could provide. Today our

Education and the Century of Progress Chicago—Last month the Chicago Board of Education struck the Chicago public school system a terrific blow which may mean its permanent. After a secret meeting instigated by the secret Citizen's Committee they passed a bill which removes all the educational improvements made in the last forty years. They took these steps to end the "over-education" of the youth and to revive the school system from the "fads and frills" which were supposed to be stifling it. In one stroke they cut off, or severely curtailed the parental schools, physical education, junior high schools and a junior college. These measures to revive the "little red school house" are so disastrous that they deserve our immediate attention because they are ominous signs of the decline of the public school system throughout the United States.

This act was the solution of the Board of Education, to a critical financial situation in which the public school system has been entangled for the last two years due to a premature depletion of the city treasury. For the last two years the public school employees have worked almost gratuitously and meekly like "true" patriots. The sporadic demonstrations they conducted plus a student's strike evoked nothing but a few spurious resolutions from the Board of Education.

FROM THE MILITANTS

Examples of N.R.A. at Work in St. Louis

St. Louis.—Comrade Oehler's prediction that the NRA would not solve but intensify the basic contradictions of capitalism is being borne out to the letter here in St. Louis, which may be taken as an example of all the large industrial cities. The basic contradiction of capitalism is the tremendous accelerated growth of productive forces on the one hand, (which throws thousands of workers into the ranks of the unemployed) and a steadily contracting market on the other. It was in a futile attempt to solve this contradiction that the Roosevelt administration came forward with its N. R. A. plan and its demands for a 40 hour week and a minimum wage scale.

Burden Loaded on Workers

A striking example is the garment workers strike reported in another column of the Militant by comrade Murphy. The manufacturers signed a code agreeing to the 40 hour week and a minimum wage scale of \$12 a week. In order to preserve their profits the entire burden of the code agreement had to be loaded on to the shoulders of the workers—mostly girls and women—who were already brutally exploited. A piece work scale was worked out by the bosses and handed to the workers. Under this scale many of the girls found it impossible to make their minimum.

Naturally they were fired and more efficient workers hired in their place. It was not a case of "newcomers" or inexperienced girls that were weeded out by this process. On the contrary, many of them were workers who have been employed in the trade from 5 to 10 years. In the shop where our comrade Rose Casano was employed seven girls were thus dismissed but since comrade Casano enjoys a great deal of respect among the girls in her shop, they carried on a militant fight for the seven girls fired and they were reinstated.

The Same Trick

Another concern which is putting across the same scheme is the notoriously low wage concern, the Artistic Furniture Co. The "depression" wages of this outfit was \$1.00 a day for eight hours work. Now since the code has been signed many of the "old" men (old in years as well as in service) have been dismissed because they can't make their minimum. In their place are hired young and husky men, many of whom are farmer boys drifting into the city, lured by the golden promises of the N. R. A. A "good" upholsterer can make from \$15 to \$18 a week. We have no worthwhile contacts in this factory but are working in that direction. As is to be expected the shop is bitterly anti-union and two workers have already been fired for talking organization.

Last week 500 employees of the Western Cartridge Co. of East Alton, Ill., walked out in a body protesting against the code and demanding a radical revision of it.

The reactionary ILGWU officials have already announced that at this time it is not a question of wages (heaven forbid!) but only the question of union recognition. Taking advantage of this, the Amalgamated which has some influence here, immediately began to talk about wages and shop conditions and because of this has gained additional prestige among the workers. It has also the additional advantage of being backed up by the socialist party, particularly the Yipsels who have shown exceptional courage and militancy on the picket line, not only in the garment workers strike but also in the molders strike at the Jackson-Evans Iron Co.

Interested Only in Pie-Card

The officialdom of the ILGWU is, of course, as in all other A. F. of L. unions interested only in one thing—the dues and the salaries derived from the dues. Hence its bid for the support of the bosses by laying low on the question of wages. But the workers whose exploitation has been doubled and trebled under the NRA will have something to say about this matter and the leadership will be pushed in a "leftward" direction whether they like it or not.

On one occasion during the strike when our comrade Casano was to be refused a place on a committee because it is known that she is a Communist, a girl in her shop who is hostile to Communism, took the floor to protest saying: "Who knows but that we all may be Communists before this thing is over." She was warmly applauded. The A. F. of L. bureaucrats may find it necessary to revise their past policies—in words at least.

Just as the socialist party and the Mustekets act as a brake on the leftward swing of the working masses towards Communism so it is that the Amalgamated acts as a brake in the needle trades to prevent the workers, disgusted with A. F. of L. tactics from finding their way to the class struggle unions.

Stalinists Win with the Mayor

And it is just here where the rub comes in. The Stalinists have no unions worthy of the name. The NTWU is only a shadow, and should comrade Casano step out, its already insignificant influence would melt away like snow under a mid-summer sun. In spite of the noise

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they are making about the nut pickers and the rag pickers strike, which they led, the results when summed up are practically nil. The first thing they did in the former strike was to propose a committee to see Mayor Dickman, doubtless hoping to "expose" him as an agent of the bosses. But the prophet of the New Deal was not to be found napping. Like some fabled hero of old he strides forward sword in hand to slay the dragon which was preying on "his" people. He gaily vaulted—he swore—he declared that "justice" should be done. He spoke to the strikers at the Labor Lyceum (no member of the Left Opposition has yet been permitted to speak in this fortress of Stalinism and received ten times as much applause as the Communist speakers. Many workers still believe that the victory gained was the result of the joint efforts of the Communist party and the Democratic party!

In the rag pickers where all the employees are negroes only one white man cooperated on the picket line. Insofar as actual participation in the strike was concerned the party practically sabotaged it or at least seriously neglected it (which amounts to the same thing). The one white worker referred to is Frank Bittner who although voting for my expulsion from the I. L. D. made haste to tell me that he was forced to do so or be himself expelled from the party!

—G. ROBERTS.

Davenport Stalinists Use Hooligans

Davenport, Iowa.—The first open meeting of the branch was held Saturday, August 5, 1933, at the Washington Square where about fifty workers listened to comrade Papen exposing the NRA. The party as usual became frantic due to the renewed activity of the Left Opposition, and immediately methods were devised to disrupt the open air meeting.

They got hold of a degenerate, with whom it is well-known there is something wrong in his upper story, to get up and rave at the speaker, threatening arrests and howling at the top of his voice. But the meeting was not broken up in spite of this rotten method of the party who have to resort to such means because they cannot answer the conclusive arguments of the Left Opposition. It is well-known that the party member called and hauled this depraved individual by the name of Frank Holliday to the place of the meeting.

Not satisfied with the threats that were made at the meeting the party leaders mobilized for the extermination of the Left Opposition, by force, if necessary. So they proceeded to get one of their erstwhile leaders, Ray Secoy, drunk and on Wednesday August 9th they waylaid, with another gangster name unknown, comrade Papen who was on his way to his fishing camp along a lonely road and proceeded to attack him. The fight was only stopped by a stranger and his wife from a house nearby.

It would not be amiss to describe this Ray Secoy who is aspiring for leadership in the party, but who was defeated, due to the activities of the Left Opposition, for the Section Executive Committee at the last election on which he had served up until that time. He is known locally as a degenerate of the worst type. He is trying to utilize the same methods as he previously did in his hijacking of workers by hold-ups for which he has served time once in a penitentiary and another time in the local county jail.

These local leaders of the party are especially vicious due to the exposure by the Left Opposition of their incorrect policies, by the fact that the district leadership of the party, in District 8, has made them scapegoats for the wrong policies of the Central Committee and the District Committee.

It is evident by the above actions that the party leadership will stop at nothing to prevent the Left Opposition from being active and presenting its ideas to the workers of the tri-cities.

St. Louis Dress Workers Strike for Recognition

St. Louis.—The ILGWU of St. Louis has declared a general walk out for the industry. To date about 90 percent of the shops have joined the strike. Some 2,500 workers out of the 3,000 employed in the trade have walked out and more are leaving the shops every day. The largest and nationally known shops are effected by the strike.

The reason for the strike is that the bosses have signed the NRA but refuse to pay the minimum wage. The grievance of the piece workers is that under the present rates they cannot make the minimum pay. To meet this condition the bosses speed up the machines and if the workers cannot make the minimum they are fired.

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Lessons of the United Front

(Concluded in this issue)

POLITICAL BLOCS (Extra-Parliamentarian)

The united front of working class organizations and a political bloc of two organizations against other organizations are two entirely different things. The same elements enter into both but the relationship is entirely different. It is one thing to call a united front of all organizations and find one or more refusing to join. It is another thing to form a political bloc between two organizations as a united front.

The difference between a united front and political blocs as FORMS of united action cannot be settled within the frame work of the discussion on the question of the united front tactic. The differences between two forms can only be understood properly when the theoretical and political questions underlying the question of the united front are considered. It is often possible for organizations of opposite theoretical positions to momentarily pose tactical questions in the same light, as far as surface indications reveal. Such "similarity" is not sufficient grounds for a political bloc. Such a "united front" would only result in blundering and confusing the basic theoretical and more fundamental differences between these organizations. Such is the question and relation of the Right, Centre and Left Opposition.

The question of a revolutionary bloc, such as Communists and colonial revolutionists is a two fold question of program and limitations, and the frame work of the united action.

THE MARXIAN CONCEPT OF THE UNITED FRONT

The purpose of the united front is, (1) to bring to bear the greatest amount of working class pressure possible against the capitalist system, and, (2) to gain our class objective and immediate class interest, (3) to train and educate the masses and their organizations in action, (4) to expose in action all misleaders, agents of the capitalists, and opportunists, and (5) to win the rank and file to class struggle and revolution under the leadership of the Communist Party. This leadership cannot be guaranteed in advance, it must be won in action. The united front must at no time result in a compromise on principles.

The united front is (1) a temporary agreement, (2) between working class organizations, (3) on immediate demands, (4) in action, (5) where each organization retains its organizational independence, (6) refrains from slander and personal attacks, (7) but maintains the right of minority expression and political criticism, (8) no exclusion of working class organizations, (9) and where continued effort must be made to bring into the united front those organizations that refuse to participate.

The organization with a Marxian program has nothing to lose and everything to gain by united action of the working class. Marxism will stand all tests in theory and practice.

—HUGO OEHLER.

Some of the shops pay the code scale to some workers and not to others. Lay-offs are prevalent. About 20 pay checks were photographed which ranged from \$1.00 for three days and \$8.50 for four days.

The Yipsels have some influence among the shops and have shown great militancy on the picket line. Yesterday 18 pickets were arrested for picketing the shops still working. For singing the Internationale and Solidarity they were arrested on the charge of "disturbing the peace". Among the pickets arrested was comrade Rose Casano of the Left Opposition.

The speeches by the workers are fair but they lack leadership. About all the A. F. L. gives them is a few radical phrases and then: "We must stick to our (!) government and the N. R. A." The same reactionary stuff over and again.

But in spite of the labor skates the workers are militant. The walls of the old jail echoed with the strains of the Internationale. The cops just stood and gaped in astonishment.

Comrade Casano has been doing fine work and was one of the first to get the workers in her shop to down tools 100 percent. About 100 workers were employed in her shop. The L. O. has offered speakers as well as pickets to the strikers. It is doing all it can to help the strikers and gain influence among them. The Stalinists are nowhere to be seen.

—LLOYD MURPHY.

N. Y. FOOD WORKERS MEET FOR UNITED ACTION

Last Tuesday, Aug. 22, in response to a call by the Amalgamated Food Workers Union for united action of all food workers organizations, a mass meeting was held in Palm Gardens Hall, N. Y. More than one thousand workers were present. The TUTU was at hand but the vague references made by its speaker on the subject of united action under a united organization called forth a very cool reception from the workers. Gitlow, (representing the A. F. W.) on the contrary, played up this very thing that the party speaker omitted and fairly brought down the house.