

REVIEWS

The Trend of the Times

"Rebellion in the Labor Unions." By Sylvia Kopald. Boni and Liveright, New York.

THAT the alleged labor leaders have long been separated, economically and ideologically, from the membership of the rank and file in the unions, has been patent to anyone with even half-open eyes. To make the rank and file of the unions see this has been quite another matter, and still is. Sylvia Kopald, in "Rebellion in the Labor Unions," gives us a graphic picture of the betrayals by which the membership in the trades and industrial unions in America are coming to recognize their "labor leaders,"—Gompers, Farrington, Lewis, Berry, et al., as "union scabs," as capitalist tools and agents.

Four rank and file revolts are vividly pictured in the book—the Printers' Vacation movement in 1919, the revolt of the Illinois Miners in 1920, the Railroad "outlaw" or "wild-cat" strike in 1920, the New York Web Pressmen's strike in 1923. All these strikes began as struggles for decent wages and working hours and developed into an intense and bitter struggle against the bureaucracy and despotism of the labor misleaders, who on each occasion sold out to the employers, and who invoked governmental pressure—thugs and gunmen—against the insurgent unionists.

The fake labor leaders in the American labor movement demonstrate at every opportunity, in each struggle, that their chief business in life is to crush by any means every attempt of the workers to get better conditions of livelihood, to thrust outside any militancy and class conscious expression in the unions, and, conversely, to give every aid and comfort to the capitalist class. Nor do these capitalist agents in labor's ranks have any misgivings about their actions; material comforts that capitalism affords them, the "honors" accorded them as traitors to the workers by the employers and the government, have salved any conscience they may have had. Class collaboration between the union bureaucrats and the employers and capitalist government has attained maximum efficiency in America.

Repeated and systematic betrayal of the workers by their "leaders" has often brought down the wrath of the rank and file of the unions on the heads of their traitorous officialdom. But this wrath and insurgency has, for the most part, been unorganized; it has not had a solid program to meet the problems arising in the unions except the easiest, but poorest way, out of the trouble,—that is, to get mad and leave the unions even more completely in the control of the labor fakers. Dual unionism, the patent medicine against union ills, whether ills of wages or ills of leadership, has been found to be, not a cure, but a disease. In the recognition of this fact lies the hope of the rejuvenation of the American labor unions into fighting class bodies, into revolutionary labor unions.

Internationally, the Red International of Labor Unions, and in America, the Trade Union Educational League, have evolved the slogans: Into the Unions! Win the rank and file to the class program, whether it be for amalgamation of the existing unions, the Labor Party, or the Soviet Revolution. Win the membership for a militant program and then for the

Revolution itself. The program of the Trade Union Educational League meets opposition and suppression from the labor fakers, but success among the rank and file.

The spontaneous and angry revolts brilliantly pictured by Miss Kopald mean much indeed, but even more significant is the conscious and organized militancy within the unions. One is the road to despair and desperation; the other is the road to power by the workers over the prostrate bodies of labor misleaders and their aids, the employers and the capitalist government. Miss Kopald's book is informative, both for sources and day to day fighting material, and it is inspiring. It should circulate well among thinking workers.

Yes, "Trades unionists are long suffering people indeed." But their patience is passing, and thereby comes the beginning of the passing of their suffering. Militant organization within the unions is producing good effects for the rank and file and acute indigestion for Gompers, Lewis, Berry and the rest of the offal. "The fight within the unions is on, whether in terms of amalgamation, industrial unionism or what not. Behind the conservatives is the power of the official machine. Behind the radicals is the trend of the times."

The author writes, of course, from the typical "impartial" intellectualist point of view, and while it should be clearly understood that the book is not written by a communist or from a communist viewpoint, it certainly is a welcome addition to the sparse literature on such a vitally important subject as left wing unionism in America.

Martin Abern.

Once Over

"All God's Chillun Got Wings." By Eugene O'Neil. Boni & Liveright, New York.

A WITLESS, bitterly-prejudiced white girl marries in her utter need a supersensitive Negro. Her "pride" then leads her to despise her husband and to rejoice, when he fails because of his paralyzing consciousness of race hate. At the last she goes crazy and he resolves to nurse and care for her forever.

The play is a good study of a tender, sensitive nature chained to one that is hateful and unbalanced. Unfortunately it has become a bone of contention. The white morons denounce it because it deals with miscegenation. The black morons (the race aristocrats) denounce it, because it shows a Negro marrying a girl who is no longer a virgin. Horrible! The liberal imbeciles (New Republic and American Mercury) defend it as a splendid presentation of the moral ruin caused by cross-mating. If an intelligent man or woman, white or black, marries a fool, a hateful fool, there will be a tragedy, but what has color to do with it? Geo. McLaughlin.

"The Last of the Heretics." By Algernon Sydney Crapsey. A. A. Knopf, New York.

THIS autobiography is the story of a Christian squirt gun filled with the milk of human kindness which was successively trained against slavery during the Civil War, against fundamentalism in religion, and finally against greed and inhumanity as manifested in the capitalist system.

Crapsey was a minister who, in 1906, was unfrocked by the Protestant Episcopal Church for heresy. When Bishop Brown was tried for heresy a month ago he was said to have been the first person tried for heresy in this country. Everybody had forgotten Crapsey, such is fame. Karl Pretshold.