

A Concrete Program on the Unemployed

Continued from last issue

In the proletarian quarter alone can be affected the widest mobilization of the unemployed and of the workers generally. Here is the place where the poorer sections of the petty-bourgeoisie can be neutralized and in part won over. Here is the place where the relatives of the unemployed who may be working elsewhere can be drawn into the movement. Since the proletarian quarters usually surround large factories whose workers live in the neighborhood, here is where a living unity between employed and unemployed can be consummated and strikes of all the factories in the quarters most easily affected. Finally here is where the police are weakest and the workers strongest!

4. The fourth difference is that such a method as the proposed insures the development of leadership from among the workers and the activation of the non-Communist council members. In this respect the Party can show no worthwhile results whatever. But since large sections of workers, with the exception of those not yet expelled by the Party are "fascists", "social-fascists" or worse, what can be expected? Under the plan proposed, however, this will be changed through the small block unemployment council. Real business will be conducted by the members themselves, their own officers and executives will be elected, small dues will be paid, meetings will be held regularly, responsible work will be assigned to all, delegates will be elected to higher bodies, reports will be regularly made, policies will be initiated and understood by the rank and file, the terror of the police will be minimized, the leaders tested. In short the unemployment group becomes the real leader of its block.

We come now to the question: how is it that these simple considerations never entered the heads of the Party officials, that no such work was ever done? The answer is clear. The leaders of the Party are amateurs and worse. They never won their spurs of leadership through doing mass work in a Communist way. The few who tried mass work (like Foster et al.) did so as so-called "fascists", that is as CONSCIOUS AND LOYAL agents of the Gompers in the American Federation of Labor. The Party has never really chosen its leaders. Foreign federationism, factionalism, and the C.I., saw to that. Finally, the Party never was and never developed into a real Communist Party in the United States. Under the able "leadership" of past and present "leaders" such a development was impossible.

III

The unemployment movement must have a comprehensive and concrete program of activity, far different from that of the faker-leaders of the party, a program that will answer the question of the workers: "What are we to do when we are hungry, are being evicted from our homes, are out of a job?" How indeed shall the hungry be fed and evictions stopped? The Party shouts "Work or Wages" or "the Insurance Bill" reminding one sometimes of the English Chartists, who, misguided by the English bourgeoisie in 1832 used to shout for "The Bill! the Bill! Nothing but the Bill!"

First a few words on the slogan "Work or Wages." Since when do Communists demand "work" from the capitalists? The "Right to Work" was never a Marxist slogan. After the proletarian revolution, the dictatorship makes it plain that every person had the DUTY to work, but before the proletarian revolution, while work means work under capitalism, work that strengthens capitalism, only A. F. of L. fakers, opportunist socialists, or worse, demand for labor "the Right to Work." But perhaps the Party is only supplementing the "theory" in Browder's pamphlet "Out of a Job" that if the capitalists recognize Russia, there will be work. "Recognize Soviet Russia and get a job goes hand in hand with the slogan "we want work!"

The new slogan "Social Insurance Bill" is a clumsy method of correcting the error in "Work or Wages" so as to throw the weight of the demand not on "work" but on "wages".

Spreading Parliamentary Illusions

It is plain to all conscious workers that the Party's social insurance bill can never be carried out in America without a proletarian revolution. This is not made clear by the Party. The Party, by making the campaign in the way it is doing, is

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helping only to spread opportunist and parliamentary illusions. Besides while the workers must raise the question of social insurance in the sharpest manner, making it also a slogan for building a labor party) a social insurance bill proposition can not give bread to the starving nor shelter to the evicted. How can we answer the question of the hungry and evicted jobless? ONLY BY ANSWERING: SELF HELP WILL GIVE YOU BREAD AND SHELTER! The proletarian revolution will do so permanently, seizure of food and shelter will do so immediately.

We must boldly say to the starving and destitute poor that the whole immediate objective of the unemployment movement is to seize the things necessary to live. The careful organization work in the proletarian quarters, the carefully prepared street demonstrations must all be with the thought firmly in mind of leading to that situation where the workers are enabled to help themselves of the things they need!

If the immediate major objective of the unemployment movement is the seizure of the necessities of life, the entire program of the unemployed movement must be based on getting food and shelter for the jobless. The formation of Tenant League must be started by the unemployment movement on a large scale. Desperate resistance of every kind must be put up to every eviction that takes place. Here we can learn a great deal from the tactics used in the Passaic, New Bedford and Gastonia strikes. The widest movement of resistance, including making it unprofitable for landlords to evict, the boycott, picketing mass resistance street demonstrations and strikes can be aroused on the question of evictions and non-payment of rent. Such movements are the best teachers for the revolution.

Hand in hand with the formation of Tenant Leagues should go the formation of cooperative restaurants—we hasten to add, not like those of the "Proletcos" in Union Square, or of the "co-operative houses" in the Bronx, and not like the "soup kitchens" proposed by Party members—but real workers co-operative restaurants that will cost but very little to establish that will sell a few simple dishes at cost (and thus help those who while not destitute have but very little money), that will help compel "contributions" from other stores and restaurants, that will help to support a movement for the extension of credit by storekeepers to workers families out of work, that will wipe out the color line most effectively etc.

The question of food and shelter involves the question of wages. The unemployment movement must be closely bound up with the movement for resistance to wage cuts and worsened conditions. The unemployment movement must help in the organization of the unorganized and in the creation of a strong Left wing to win the workers in the reactionary unions to a militant policy.

The immediate program of non-payment of rent, resistance to evictions reduction of the cost of living extension of credits, seizure of food etc. as well as the fight for social insurance can be enforced only by means of street demonstrations. It is to this important question that we now turn.

Street Demonstrations

Street demonstrations and street fighting in America have an extraordinary significance. Especially at the present time, "food riots" breaking out in New York City, Chicago, Detroit, or the other large cities of the United States would be of truly enormous international importance.

This puts upon the Communists in these cities an extraordinary responsibility to prepare and to organize these demonstrations. Nothing more exposes the phrase-mongering of the Party bureaucrats than their "demonstrations". In phrase—"Fight the Police", in practice—put the workers in such a position that they could not fight. In phrase—"Seize the Streets", in practice—hold a meeting in a business district in an open square, get a lot of pictures taken buy a lot of ice-cream cones and candy sold by street vendors peddling in the very midst of the crowd all through the meeting and call it a "demonstration", etc. In New York City all main demonstrations have been held in Union Square. In Newark and most other cities they are staged before the city halls. "This politicalizes it don't you know."

The Party wants to fight the police. Good. But then why not think HOW to fight the police? Do the fools leading the Party ever think of this? Let us analyze the meetings at Union Square, New York City, or City Hall Newark. 1. It is in a commercial neighborhood. 2. It is a huge open square. 3. It is far from the big factories. 4. It is far from workers' neighborhoods. 5. The police entirely surround the meeting. Can you imagine a general calling on his troops to fight, who isolates his vanguard from his reserves and places them in a regular police trap? Maybe this was the way Browder fought Chiang Kai-Shek. eh? Poor Chiang Kai-Shek! If the leaders of the Party were stool-pigeons—to use the favorite expression of Browder—they could not betray a fighting movement better.

How then, should street demonstrations be organized. a. Mainly, through the block groups in proletarian neighborhoods. Here, the streets are often more narrow. Here, if fighting takes place, the workers have a chance. The buildings can be used advantageously. Here the fight can spread. The police can not easily surround it. The widest masses, wives, families, storekeepers, students, clerks, employed workers, etc. can be drawn in. Shops and factories can be pulled on strike and swept into the battle. In short, here the police are weakest and the workers strongest. Through the fighting squads organized by the block groups, a whole section of the

Urgent Appeal!

As our readers will note by the date of the present issue, we were compelled to skip publication of the October 15th number. The omission was caused by the bad financial situation of the Militant which forced us last summer to go back from weekly to semi-monthly publication. To skip even a single issue of the paper now is a heavy blow to us. It means that the many of the problems with which the Militant deals regularly, the questions it takes up, the information it presents that is contained in no other revolutionary paper in this country must be neglected.

The need the Militant fills in the movement is being understood by an ever-increasing circle of workers. The Militant is more and more becoming the organ of the most conscious and thinking section of the Communist and Left wing movement. In the marine industry, in the coal miners' struggle in Illinois, in the needle trades, in the reviving Left wing in the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America—in a dozen other situations, the Militant is doing pioneer work of immense significance. It is not only a semi-monthly that is required: we must have a weekly as soon as possible!

The temporary setback in regular publication which we have suffered does not at all correspond with our growth in influence and membership. On the contrary. Our ranks and influence are growing. Our activities are multiplying. BUT OUR COMRADES AND SYMPATHIZERS HAVE NOT YET REALIZED THE FINANCIAL BURDEN THAT MUST BE CARRIED. The omission of the last number must serve to remind them sharply of this problem that must be solved by all. We can and must rely only upon our members and friends. It is they who must relieve the pressure of the financial difficulties that prevents us from executing many of the tasks that confront us so imperatively.

These of our supporters who are working must give doubly. Those of them who are out of work must give their aid by soliciting donations from other workers and friends. UNLESS WE RECEIVE SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND HAVE OUR REGULAR INCOME INCREASED IMMEDIATELY, THE EXISTENCE OF THE MILITANT IS DIRECTLY THREATENED.

We need five hundred dollars right away! It is not a large sum, but it will enable us to push ahead with our work. Every comrade and friend must aid—generously, swiftly, with a realization of the burning need. Check up on all unpaid bills! Make a substantial donation by mail immediately! Collect contributions from your fellow workers! Get subscriptions for the paper! Bear in mind that the Militant is in serious danger!

Send all funds immediately to the of-

city could be held.

b. Demonstrations should be held not merely on "ritual days" mechanically set by Moscow for the whole world, but at times when there are burning local issues to meet. The evictions of families, or a local strike, or the picketing of shops that have raised prices or a similar event, can very well become the starting point.

c. But besides that general huge demonstrations should be held so arranged that they can result in the workers helping themselves to food! This is of paramount importance, a fact that the lovers of Union Squares and City Hall Parks entirely fail to see. Such demonstrations must be most carefully prepared.

d. Marches from the proletarian quarter in mighty disciplined formations marks naturally the highest stake of the struggle to a central point or to the City Hall and should be held when the movement is widespread and well organized and when there is the greatest determination to meet the stiffest police attack. Under some circumstances, in some countries such a stage of the struggle may very well mean the beginning of the issuance of the slogan for Workers Control of the factories, etc.

The organization of such a movement can not be done without the creation of the widest united front of the workers. Of this the Party "leaders" with their theories of "Fascism" and "Social Fascism" are incapable. But it must be done. This is a test also for the Communist Opposition groups. Come, when will you mobilize your forces? When will you join hands on this issue? When will you issue a broad united front call? When will you begin the work the Party criminals can not do?

Office of The Militant, 25 Third Avenue, New York, N. Y.

OUR STUDY CLASSES

Two successful classes have already been organized by the New York branch of the Communist League of America, each with an average of 25 worker-students. One is conducted by James P. Cannon, on "A History of the American Labor Movement" and the other by Albert Weisbord, on "Marxian Economics". More students have registered for the Weisbord class than there was room for, and others who registered cannot attend on Friday night which is when the class meets. To accommodate them, another class has been opened for them on Thursday nights with comrade Weisbord as director. This class begins on Thursday, November 13. Workers who have not yet registered for this course can do so by getting in touch immediately with the Militant office, at 25 Third Avenue, Room 4, New York, N. Y. The classes meet at the Labor Temple, 14th Street and 2nd Avenue: Weisbord's every Friday and Thursday, Cannon's every second Wednesday. The tuition fee is purely nominal. Make registrations immediately.

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUG. 24, 1912.

Of The Militant, published weekly at New York, N. Y. for Oct. 1, 1930.
State of New York:
County of New York:

Before me, a Notary in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Max Shachtman, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of the Militant and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor and business managers are: Publisher: Communist League of America (Opposition) 25 Third Avenue, New York, N. Y.
Editor: None.

Managing Editor: Max Shachtman, 25 Third Avenue, New York, N. Y.
Business Manager: Martin Abern, 25 Third Avenue, New York City.

2. That the owner is: Communist League of America (Opposition), 25 Third Avenue, N. Y. C. Martin Abern, 25 Third Avenue, N. Y. C. J. P. Cannon, 25 Third Avenue, N. Y. C. Max Shachtman, 25 Third Ave. N. Y. C. Maurice Spector, 25 Third Avenue, N. Y. C. Arne Swaback, 25 Third Ave. N. Y. C.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities, in a capacity other than of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

Max Shachtman, Managing Editor.
Sworn to and subscribed before me this 20th day of October, 1930. M. R. Keefe, Notary Public.
(My commission expires March 30, 1931)