

For Economic Collaboration with Russia

By SAM GORDON

The last census figures record more than six million workers out of a job. Considering the usual disparity experienced in the past between the official data and the actual numbers, this means in reality, close to ten million unemployed. 10,000,000 workers without jobs. With their families, additional millions are condemned to a starvation diet. Meanwhile, industry still remains clogged up, the crisis keeps on swelling, drawing more and more branches of production into the jam, and no outlet is in sight. Another capitalist country, only recently said to be going through a period of "belated capitalist bloom"—France—has entered the ban of the world wide depression. There too, the unemployment figures are mounting, misery and discontent are growing. The world market "has shrunk."

One country alone shows signs of bustling economic life. That is the Soviet Union. While capitalism is on the down slide, while capitalist anarchy once more, and to a far more serious degree than ever before, upsets the already shaky balance of the existing social conditions, planned, socialized industry in Soviet Russia advances by leaps and bounds, pointing out the inevitable road that world economy must take in the future.

On the one side, we have world unemployment, an expression of the failure of the capitalist system. On the other, we have the Five Year Plan, an example of successful socialist construction.

In the capitalist United States, the last census figures tell us that new millions of workers have been thrown out of industry. In Soviet Russia the latest statistics show that nearly a million new workers have been introduced into industry, in the course of the execution of the Five Year Plan. The second year shows that the plan has been far surpassed in the oil output, and has registered enormous rises in steel, machinery and electro-technical production. The collectivization of agriculture, which, according to the figure given, has reached 50 per cent in the grain area, has enabled the Soviet Union to export threefold the amount of grain exported in pre-war years. The seven hour day has been established for 43.5 per cent of the total number of workers and the average wage has been increased by 12.1 per cent for the period of the first two years of the plan. All in all, an especially pointed proof of the superiority of the socialist system of production over the capitalist methods, particularly offset by the depression and decline of world economy.

These indisputable successes stand firm. The Five Year Plan has confirmed the expediency of socialist production and has guaranteed success for the future. But the Five Year Plan cannot be carried out without the aid of the outside world. The backwardness of Russian industry cannot altogether be wiped out. Finished products (shoes, clothing, etc.) are needed to raise the living standards of the workers, to replenish the energy, the material resources of the Russian workers who have spared no sacrifice in their enthusiastic execution of the plan. Light machinery must be imported in large quantities to supply these needs.

The basic product of Soviet export is grain. The collectivization of agriculture, based on high class technique, can bolster up the grain export immensely and thus greatly increase the purchasing power of the Soviets with which industrialization, planned economy would receive new, more stupendous impulses. For this purpose too, large imports of agricultural machinery are required.

At present, the capitalist governments, despite the deep-going depression that is undermining them, are unwilling to facilitate these imports to the Soviet Union, which would give work to thousands upon thousands of workers in their own countries. They prefer to divert the workers' discontent away from the real causes by fairy tales of "Soviet dumping." They want to force the workers' state to retreat from its hard-earned socialist positions. They fear the great sweep that the Five Year Plan gives to international revolutionary action.

Soviet Russia, despite its great achievements, is not an isolated, self-sufficient economic unity. It is bound up by the threads of world economy and must act as part of it, utilizing its strengthened positions as a weapon of the world revolution. The Soviet Union needs the aid of world economy for the success of the Five Year Plan. The capitalists are reluctant to grant this aid. The workers of the capitalist countries are out of work in large numbers. Soviet orders from their countries means work for thousands of them. The workers are the ones that must fight for long term credit grants to enable the Soviets to buy

machinery with which to assure the success of the Five Year Plan.

Soviet orders to the United States, even under the limited credit possibilities of the present, have already given work to thousands of American workers, who would otherwise have been thrown into the gutter. "Had it not been for these Russian orders [for machine tools]" writes the **Cleveland Plain Dealer**, "many Cleveland factories would have faced a shutdown when automobile orders temporarily stopped." "Employment for several hundred additional men will be furnished . . . in filling a contract . . . to recondition thirteen steamers recently acquired by the Soviet government from the U. S. Shipping Board." The last, an item from the **Boston Herald**.

Tractor factories, automobile plants, transportation enterprises and all sorts of industrial undertakings have been kept going by Soviet orders. A group of American business men is even now negotiating with the U. S. government for credits to the Soviet Union. Their leader, Col. Cooper, the engineer of the Dnieprostroy Power Station in Russia, stated in a speech before the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce recently, that

"It requires but a small amount of study from my point of view to visualize the not far distant time when we can be exporting to Russia at least one billion dollars per annum".

And he gave quite substantial reasons to back up his contention. Yet, even if his estimate were a bit optimistic, there cannot be any doubt that the possibilities for Soviet purchases here would offer serious relief to large sections of the unemployed here in the states.

What then is the task of the Communists under these conditions. The task of the Communists is to link up closely this demand for the extension of long term credits to the Soviet Union with their general struggle for unemployment relief. To concretize before the workers the possibilities that these long term credits offer for their immediate relief, in the shape of filling orders required by the Five Year Plan. To make clear to them on this opportune occasion the superiority of the socialist system. And to mold on this basis their in-

ternational class solidarity with the workers of the Soviet Union. In this popular and concrete manner of revolutionary propaganda, supported by facts and by a clear Marxist principle position that recognizes the international character of the working class movement at all times, unheard of progress can be made in the way of developing the class consciousness of the American workers and advancing the class struggle in the United States as well as in every other capitalist country.

But what is the official party leadership doing in this direction? Absolutely nothing. The aid that the Five Year Plan can be in relieving unemployment in the capitalist countries, finds no explanation, no place in the propaganda of the party around the unemployment problem. Why? Because such propaganda is in direct contradiction to the Stalinist theory of the building up of socialism in one country, which rejects the close international bonds between the construction of socialism in Russia and the class struggle in the rest of the world. Instead of asking the aid of the proletariat of the West to obtain credits for Soviet industry, Stalin deals with the capitalists behind the backs of the workers under the shameful un-Marxist and anti-revolutionary banner of "the peaceful cohabitation of capitalism and Communism." The workers of Europe and America are not drawn into the concrete every day struggle of the heroic workers of Soviet Russia. The tasks of the Communists in the capitalist countries are considered isolated and apart from the tasks in Russia—if they are not held to be altogether insignificant. International revolutionary action is precluded by the narrow un-Leninist policy of national socialism. The Stalinist leadership in the U.S.S.R. and in the Comintern looks upon the international proletariat not as upon the indispensable allies in the struggle for the construction of socialism as part of the world revolution, but rather as upon admiring spectators who will some day, somehow be moved to emulate the example of Soviet Russia.

What happens under such circumstances? A recent event in Germany serves as a good illustration. A group of German capitalists, after a visit to the Soviet Union decided to grant the latter credits to the extent of \$250,000,000. Immediately, the **Berlin Rote Fahne**, the central organ of the

German Communist party, follows this with a headline "Five Year Plan Gives Work To Tens of Thousands of German Workers". What part was played in this matter by the German Communists? Absolutely none. That is not at all. The credit grant has come up before the Reichstag for ratification. The reactionary Brüning government, supported by the yellow social democracy, refuses to guarantee the credits in sum, but purposes on the contrary to take up each case of credit extension seriatim: a process that delays the shipment of machinery absolutely necessary to meet the requirements of the Five Year Plan. But in all this, the Communist party is caught off guard. Opportunities come and go without being utilized, without being exploited to revolutionary advantage.

The Five Year Plan, executed without an international revolutionary perspective and in the well known bureaucratic manner of the Stalinist adventurers, has been considerably endangered in the past. The "one-hundred-percent collectivization" policy weakened it greatly on the peasant front. The irresponsible excesses on the industrial front, carried out in the name of "the Five Year Plan in three years, inflicted considerable damage in the way of bringing about a definite and dangerous lagging behind the program, which the **Pravda** recently points out under the title: "Alarm Signals". There is a great shortage in finished goods. The material conditions of the workers are not keeping pace with the rapid strides in industry. The Five Year Plan needs help. Already the Centrist bureaucracy under Stalin is preparing to capitulate before the difficulties by a Right wing turn in the direction of a "Neo-Nep". All Communists must be on guard against the return to the opportunist swamp and fight against it.

The slogan of long term credits to the Soviet Union must penetrate the broadest layers of workers and unemployed in the formation of a solid united front of struggle. The fight around the slogan of long term credits to the Soviets is a fight that eventually results in mutual benefits to the workers of both the United States and Russia. It cements the bonds of working class solidarity on an international scale, based on the actual needs of the moment. The slogan of long term credits to aid the execution of the Five Year Plan unites the Workers of America and of Europe with the workers of Russia in a combined struggle against capitalism and for the victory of world socialism. It is the duty of the Communists to carry it deep into the masses.

The Slogan of the Six-Hour Working-Day

By ARNE SWABECK

come a powerful means of unifying the working masses, employed and unemployed alike, and set them into motion against their class enemy. Thirdly, it corresponds with the working class needs today. Particularly in the industrially highly developed United States has machine production reached such a stage that the very right to live for millions of workers becomes bound up with a drastic reduction of the present working day.

The Workers' Resistance

Working class resistance to the capitalist offensive is appearing now in its first early manifestations. The short strike of the Lawrence textile workers has been followed by others in the New England textile region. At the Kensington, Pa. mills, several thousand workers have fought militantly against the increased speed-up. So far it is only embracing light industry, but in southern Illinois also groups of coal miners and metal workers have resisted the bosses in the face of a most terrific onslaught. Likewise in the unemployment movement there is a growth of militancy. All in all, these early signs are the harbingers of great struggles to come.

Even a possible revival of the capitalist production cycle would not seriously alter this perspective. Such a possible revival would have as its foundation more speed-up and more wage reductions. It would only make so much more inevitable the resistance of the working class.

A general reduction of the American working class standard is the avowed policy of the capitalist masters. Particularly is the unemployment crisis being taken advantage of for a drastic wage-cutting campaign. Demands for "reduced cost of production" are continually reiterated in publicity material from the big banks of the country. The extent to which actual wage cuts are being enforced may be noted from late reports of the Labor Bureau, Inc. During February wage cuts were twice as numerous as increases.

The Miners and Railroad Workers

The coal miners and the railroad workers look forward to the establishment of the six-hour day as a means of diminishing the ravages of unemployment. We remember

the impudent demand of John L. Lewis, made back in 1928, to eliminate from the industry 250,000 coal miners. In reality, more than that number have already been either definitely eliminated from the industry or remain there—in the standing army of unemployed. In the railroad industry on the Class 1 Roads, between December 1929 and December 1930 a total of 248,527 workers lost their jobs according to the Bureau of Statistics of the Interstate Commerce Commission. In other industries, similarly, the machine developments are rapidly displacing labor power, adding to the ranks of the unemployed even during the favorable periods of the capitalist production cycles.

It may thus appear as if the demand for the six hour work day without reduction in pay, in the present unemployment situation, becomes purely an objective of amelioration. While naturally this is one of its purposes, it is by no means the whole. Such a demand presented at this time and adopted by the organized section of the working class, would effectively help to prepare for the general workers' offensive which will become so essential.

Immediate demands by their very nature are limited in scope and cannot present any solution to the working class problems. They do not by themselves reach beyond the bounds of reformism and always carry the danger of strengthening of reformist illusions. But an actual demand for the shorter work day when obtained can become a source of further strength to the working class in its advance toward the revolutionary goal. The struggle for its attainment can become a powerful lever to set mass forces into motion. Moreover, by virtue of the fact that it embraces the interest of the employed and unemployed workers alike it will similarly become a powerful instrument for unity of the masses.

The six hour work day slogan, which does not exclude other necessary slogans but supplements them, particularly possesses this quality. It further becomes the general focal point for all efforts towards the shorter work day. This is already now a life's necessity for the American working class. The six hour day without reduction in pay should become the central slogan of the toiling masses.

For almost half a century the slogan of the eight hour working day was one of the most powerful slogans of the working class throughout the world. Everywhere it became inscribed upon the proletarian banners, inspiring solidarity, and unifying the struggles. It was violently contested throughout by the capitalist enemy.

To the capitalist class the longer workday represents so much more absolute surplus value produced without any additional investments in the instruments of production owned by them. More surplus value spells more profits. This is the basic reason for their bitter opposition to any shortening of the workday. They have no intention of granting it without the most severe struggle. In fact they would rather, pressed to the wall, grant many other concessions which do not cut so directly into their profits. They know that the shorter workday is a real gain for the working class.

A "Visionary" Slogan

The eight hour working day is not as yet established for the working class as a whole in any country. Nevertheless, would it be more "visionary" today to advance the slogan of the six hour workday without reduction in pay than it was when the eight hour work day slogan was first promulgated preceding the struggles of the '80s? Not at all!

Could victory in a struggle for realizing the six hour work day appear within the realm of practical possibility to the American workers today? The answer must be: "Yes." One need only remember that already in 1922 the United Mine Workers convention, by rank and file pressure, adopted a program of fight for the six hour work day. At this moment within the various conservative railroad unions there is developing a demand for the six hour work day without reduction in pay. One may also recall the proposal of the last A. F. of L. Metal Trades Department convention for a five hour work day without taking it seriously in the sense of expecting a struggle for its attainment.

It is, however, primarily as an offensive slogan for the coming rising labor movement that the demand for the six hour work day without reduction in pay assumes its real importance. Secondly, it can be-