

For the 6 Hour Day-No Pay Reduction

The Importance of the Struggle for the Shorter Work Day

The motion within the working class caused by the present crisis is a forerunner to impending historic changes. In such a situation it is the duty and task of the Communist to point out the road and lead the way. But once again we find the revisionists within our ranks, the Stalinists, pointing out the road, first of adventure and then of opportunism. This contradictory swing from one extreme to the other is most glaring in the unemployment activity. To the Browders, Johnstones and the district organizers throughout the country, the six hour day slogan is counter-revolutionary, and a new name for the stagger-system.

We present some facts for the comrades. Our literature and propaganda must be so conducted that we never lose sight of our goal, which we must constantly point out to the working class. The party in its Right swing has left this by the wayside, and only now and then in a mechanical way does one find party functionaries presenting the revolutionary conclusions. When a Communist party presents a string of immediate demands for unemployment activity and does not connect them with the ultimate aim, it is a serious situation; to fail to select the DETERMINING link between the present class relationships and our goal is to blunt our weapons and sidetrack our movement into an opportunist swamp, no matter how loudly we proclaim our support of the Soviet Union, etc.

Immediate demands, without proper connection with the revolutionary conclusion are of no value, and are of great harm to the Communist movement. But even if we properly connect the immediate demands to the goal, but fail to pick out the determining slogans in a given situation we also, "lag dangerously behind the task of organizing a widespread movement of the unemployed." In the resolution of the Central Committee of the party (Daily Worker 11-28-31) the American bureaucrats list one central unifying slogan: Unemployment Insurance at full wages, a slogan with 29 words. They then present seven main national slogans, which include everything, free rent, gas, light, water and immediate, extensive public work at trade union wages, and the seven hour day.

This is worse than the New York election program which was a local affair, while this is a national directive for the whole American working class. To these main slogans, the resolution adds, "It is necessary to raise local demands in the various localities."

The Main Slogans

The party does not present to the workers one, two or three short, snappy slogans as the MAIN DETERMINING slogans for our class in the present situation; this is vitally necessary. In my estimation the three outstanding slogans to be given national prominence are: The Six Hour Day, the five day week with no reduction in pay, and immediate Relief and Social Insurance (Not Social Insurance BILL). The last two have been dealt with by the party; I devote myself to the importance of the reduction of hours struggle.

Every worker with ordinary sense is for the reduction of his hours of toil. But the problem does not stop here. Some are working 12 hours, others 10 and some 8 hours. What should be the slogan for this variation? Before the worker will jump, he will want to know if he will receive less pay, because what

he makes now by working from 8 to 12 hours is not enough, and if he gets less, he just can't get by. The slogan for a six hour day does not imply 6 hours of work for every worker in the country at once, no matter how we would desire such. It means as, (for example, the 8 hour movement of the '30s) that this slogan rallies the greatest class forces in organized opposition to the capitalists, and where our pressure is the strongest, forces a reduction of hours.

If we look back at the history of our own pages of struggle, we can understand the powerful movements organized around the 10 hour struggle of the '30s and the 8 hour struggle in the '80s. Today, American industry has reached a stage rotten ripe for the struggle for the 6 hour day. The American workers of today must continue the heroic examples of the proletariat before us. The historic trend has witnessed the reduction of hours as a national outcome of the class struggle, and with it has developed the intensification of their exploitation. You cannot have your choice. If you "refuse" the reduction of hours today—the speed-up of labor will proceed full speed anyway.

The Importance of the Struggle To Reduce Working Hours

Its form may be altered somewhat, but it would be the same speed-up we all know so well. The class conscious worker knows the positive effect powerful unions and successful strikes have on real wages and the standard of living. But in spite of this constant struggle, real wages show little change, that is, the working class in the past and now receive an average wage that is equal to the minimum subsistence level. This is no argument against the struggle for these immediate demands, but it is a powerful argument against those who think they can gain their objective through immediate demands, as well as those who lose sight of the revolutionary goal. On the other hand, the above shows the futility of the social reformist struggle for immediate demands alone, but on the other hand it does not substantiate the "ultra-Leftists" who are against all immediate demands. Immediate demands are the links for the vanguard and the class. What kind of immediate demands, how they are formulated and fought for, is the decisive factor. The slogans the Central Committee of the Party presents for unemployment activity fall short of this test.

The struggle for the reduction of hours is only dragged in by the tail as an additional slogan, and is wrongly formulated at that. If it were possible to add one more hour of work per day to every employed worker, the resulting reaction, in addition to increased unemployment, would be a reduction of pay and less workers doing more work. The problem is stated wrong when one says a low hourly wage rate brings long hours—it is industries with long hours that bring in low hourly rates. On the other hand, if the workers through struggle are able to reduce the hours of toil in decisive sections of industry throughout the country, the reaction would be more workers employed and a tendency toward a rise in wages. The reduction of hours from sum-up to sun-down to the present standard has not been accompanied by a proportionate reduction in wages. On the contrary, the reduction of hours through working class struggle has witnessed an increase in wages.

Reduction of Hours is Strong Blow Against the Bosses

Considering the three overlapping factors; reduction of hours, social insurance and immediate relief for the unemployed the one that will hit the bosses the hardest is the reduction of hours. The reduction of hours hits on the source of profits, at surplus value by reducing the hours of surplus labor-time. Further, of the three, it will lay the basis for greater contradictions for capitalism once a reduction of hours is achieved. Neither immediate relief in the form of government funds, charity or social insurance will cause capitalism as many contradictions as the reduction of hours. At the same time, it is a powerful lever to unite the employed and unemployed, a weak side of the present unemployed movement; and enable the Communist vanguard to build a more durable and stable, organizational structure through the united front tactic, which in turn can be used more effectively for the other two points—immediate relief and social insurance. In other words, it is not a matter of a struggle for the reduction of hours first, and the others later, or the sidetracking of the other two factors. It is a question, not only which has the most propaganda value today, social insurance, immediate relief or the reduction of hours, but a question of how to coordinate the three factors, laying a strong organizational basis as we go along and at the same time finding the determining connecting link of the present class relations and our revolutionary goal. The reduction of hours struggle, concretized by the slogan of the Six Hour Day, the five day week and no reduction of pay is the fourfold factor.

The hopeless bureaucrat immediately says: Isn't it true that many capitalists and reformers are for the six hour day, and do not Green and the rest of the fakers say the same? He draws the conclusion that it must be counter-revolutionary—particularly since the Left Opposition presented this slogan at the very start. What more evidence does anyone want?

Party Policy Makes Easier the Role of Reformists and Fakers

For every capitalist, reformer and labor faker who is for the six hour day, I can point out an equal number (with-out trouble) who are for social insurance and particularly a Social Insurance BILL. Further, if we count noses, we will find that the Second International, numerically greater than we Communists, also say they are against capitalism and for the socialist mode of production. The main contending classes in society are vitally interested in unemployment, but for opposite reasons. The same is true of all problems of the class struggle. Only stupid bureaucrats, non-Marxists could present such arguments, as the Centrists do.

The failure of the party to lead in the struggle for the Six Hour Day, the five day week and no reduction of pay and the organizational weakness of the Communist League to transform this correct theoretical analysis into practice has resulted in allowing the social reformists and reformers to obtain the lead. They are making hay while the sun shines, because they know the impasse America is in with her tremendous machine development and the absolute decrease in the number of workers, in production. American Imperialism, in order not to allow the basic contradiction of her capi-

talist system to mature, is forced to prevent such by taking steps and measure which are in themselves contradictions, and in turn pave the way for an enlargement of the basic contradiction she is hopelessly trying to sidestep. A powerful class movement of the workers for the reduction of hours can hasten this contradiction upon capitalism, creating a condition where we have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Providing this comes about through class struggle and not through SOCIAL REFORMIST channels.

The American Stalinist leadership, with their present perspective and analysis on the unemployment question, have thrown overboard the very A B C of Marxism, not only on the theoretical side, but also in elementary economics. It is indeed time for the Communists of America to map out a program of action in all its detail for the Six Hour Day, the Five Day week with no reduction in pay.

—HUGO OEHLER.

(Supplementing comrade Oehler's valid arguments, it is necessary to add that, particularly and directly in relation to mass unemployment and efforts to relieve it, the international slogan propounded by comrade Trotsky and the Left Opposition, has the necessary strength, appeal and validity to arouse and mobilize wide masses of workers around it.

That is the slogan of large and long-term credits to the Soviet Union, a slogan that is applicable on an international scale, but is especially so in the United States. We have elaborated this question on previous occasions, and the official Communist Party, though in a back-handed inadequate and stupid manner, has found it necessary to finally also raise this slogan. With this additional slogan, as mentioned above, the position of the Communist League of America (Opposition) is a completely correct one.—Ed.)

Confusion among the Furriers

In my article in *The Militant* (Nov. 14, 1931) I wrote in part that the leadership of the Needle Trades Union who conceived the policy of electing a Joint Council for the Furriers under the auspices of their cover name—Rank and File committee—will not be caught napping when the offices are refused to them by the International President, since they had their next move already worked out, namely, that the so-called newly elected joint council will invite the Industrial union to a "real" united front.

Our prediction was carried into life on Nov. 21. On this date the two "opposing" factions in the fur trade, namely the Fur department of the N. T. W. U. and the newly-born joint council of the "Furriers International", gathered in Manhattan Hall to consider ways and means to bring about one union in the fur trade.

The conference, which was scheduled to start at 7:30, began much later because not more than two dozen workers, including myself, came to listen to the negotiations. Such an attendance at a conference that was supposed to deal with the most burning problem among the furriers at present, was ample proof that the furriers are tired and disgusted with the comedy played at their expense.

Gold's Remarks

The meeting was opened by I. Cohen and in mechanical fashion Winogradsky proposed him for chairman and Beerm for secretary; the two groups were given the honor to deliver uniform speeches. Gold, who arrived late, was disappointed to find an empty hall, or maybe he did not expect any better—who knows? In his speech Gold said that they are glad to make a united front with a rank and file joint council; for unity with them means unity to better

the conditions of the workers, whereas a united front with Sorkin and Winick would mean to give money to the above-named to betray the workers.

Gold evidently forgot to mention that he had made a united front with Sorkin in 1928, after both Sorkin and Winick were fully exposed as betrayers for trying to sell out the 1926 furriers' strike and by inaugurating the expulsion of the Left wing in 1927.

He also forgot that his co-workers, Potash, Boruchowitch, Winogradsky and the acting national secretary and editor of the Needle Worker, Henry Sazer, proposed a united front with Sorkin in March, 1931 and fought tooth and nail at the Party fraction to railroad their motion. They wanted to unite on the following basis: that Sorkin should go as a representative of the union to the next plenum of the Profintern and Winick be given a paid job as an officer. Only the stubborn flight of a group of workers in the fraction, including myself, stopped this kind of a deal.

A Protest From the Ranks

In answer to the announcement about the new headquarters to be engaged for the new council, one of our old militants, Shaffer, rose with a protest, which in reality expressed the sentiment and attitude of the bulk of the furriers in New York. He stated very definitely that this idea of opening a third union will only add more confusion to the already muddled state of affairs. Very illuminating was the reply of Jack Schneider, manager of the Fur Department of the Industrial Union to the sound objections of the old furrier. He motivated the opening of the new headquarters with the fact that many furriers who wouldn't like to come to the Industrial Union, must be provided with a different office.

Feeling the embarrassment of the situation, Winogradsky, thanks to his ingenuity, rushed forward with an absolutely harmless proposal to postpone the conference indefinitely. But this proposal does not solve the situation, nor does it diminish the confusion wrought about by the mistakes of the Left wing leadership into the ranks of the Left wing furriers. Our proposals made in the pages of *The Militant* (November 14, 1931) are correct. An explanation and acknowledgement of the mistakes in policy would help to start anew the struggle for better conditions against the bosses and their agents of every shade. —ROBERT BRILLIANT.

THE ECONOMIC MONTH

(Continued from page 1)

offer unequalled possibilities for the Communist Party of England to broaden its influence with the masses.

The Federal Reserve Banks are beating a hasty retreat from the policy of abnormal stimulation of rediscounts and purchase of bills in the open market, which was a necessity of their defense of the dollar against the flood of gold exports. The statement of Oct. 23 marked the peak of the inflationary movement—bills discounted and purchased totaled \$1,467,000,000. The Dec. statement shows these two items at a total of \$1,141,000,000. Federal Reserve note issues, however, have not declined nearly as much, from \$2,478 millions to \$2,383 during the same period. Money of all kinds in circulation actually showed an increase from \$5,594 millions to \$5,511.

The banks are still putting pressure on the bourgeoisie to liquidate the process of deflation and the strengthening of the banks is resumed, but the bourgeois reacts as best he can by holding on to his money, keeping larger and larger amounts in "circulation", that is, in hoarding. A genuine increase in note discounts and purchases would represent the beginning of a real industrial revival; the bank figures, however, indicate only a temporary financial maneuver which is now being liquidated.

Likewise belonging to the classes of financial maneuvers are the efforts of Mr. Hoover to bring back prosperity by reorganizing the War Finance Corporation and creating a new bank for loans against home building. When in doubt, organize a bank, appears to be his motto. The Germans did the same thing after the crash of 1923-24, and again in recent weeks after the July crash. It all helps to sustain the illusion that capitalism can find some other way out of the crisis than off the backs of the working class.

Exploitation of the Boatmen

(Continued from page 1)

company was about to follow suit. Captains on the O'Boyle Line came back to the union. There was talk about a strike sometime in January on this line. O'Boyle officials heard of it. Others picked up their ears and suddenly realized that the union was again about to come to life and to become a factor on New York's waterfront. Something had to be done. The usual cry of "Communist" did not seem to affect the workers. Something else must be done.

The frame-up. I need not here go into details. Workers everywhere will soon know the whole story. Enough to say that three of the union's most active members, including the writer, are today about to be railroaded up the river for life for a crime we did not commit. Our crime was the crime of trying, by organization, to rectify some of the wrongs described in this article and to gain for the members of the union an equal and decent scale of wages.

If, with the assistance of the workers everywhere, the Defense Committee succeeds in defeating this attempt of a frame-up, we shall continue, no matter where we are, to commit the crime of organizing the workers against their common enemy, the boss. To conclude this article I want to repeat my statement to police captain Lennard in the station after my arrest and when told to "confess": "There was not enough money outside to buy me, there is not enough terror in here to break me." That statement goes for all three defendants.

—JACK SODERBERG, Secretary-Treasurer of I. T. B. U.

Perspectives of the Crisis in France

(Continued from page 3)

and in value from 34,591,000,000 francs to 30,928,000,000.

Historical Background of French Capitalism

Taking the foregoing as a cross-section of the present situation of French economy, let us trace certain lines of development backward to their historical roots.

1. French capitalism has never achieved the victory over petty peasant agriculture which was so characteristic of England, which has been carried through in Germany, and which is marked in the United States by the installation of a permanent agrarian crisis. The petty bourgeois peasant was the first beneficiary of the French Revolution, on the 4th of August, 1789, when the nobility, yielding to peasant pressure, "renounced" its feudal rights. It showed its political power under the first Bonaparte, in the Restoration, in the installation of Louis Bonaparte as president of the Second Republic, in the opposition to the Commune, and down to the present time, when it forced through an increase of 200 to 300% in the tariff on agricultural products after the 1930 break in world market prices.

Economically, it is still the dominant factor in France. The value of its annual output, estimated at 113 billions of francs, is as great as that of all other industry put together. Over half the population of France still live in rural communities.

Yet it is fundamentally insufficient and unable to compete on an open market. A tabulation of the distribution of farm holdings, classified by size, was made before the war, and while a little old, is the latest available. It should be observed that some of the larger farms are operated in small pieces by tenants, so that the process of splitting-up is even

greater than that indicated.

Tables for "Perspectives of the Economic Crisis of France"

Table 1

Classification of French Farm Holdings by Size

Number of Farms	Number of Hectares
Up to 2 1/2 acres (-1 ha.)	3,235,400
2 1/2—12 1/2 acres (1-5 ha.)	1,829,259
12 1/2—25 acres (5-10 ha.)	788,299
25—125 acres (10-50 ha.)	764,461
125—250 acres (50-100 ha.)	52,048
250—500 acres (100-200 ha.)	22,777
Over 500 acres (200-ha.)	10,508
Total	5,702,792

This shows that 85% of the farms of France are of 25 acres or less. Necessarily, their productivity is small—boundary strips alone reduce the average effective area, the small holding cannot afford a high degree of mechanization which involves capital investment, and France is reckoned among the countries of low yields. In wheat, for example, along with the United States and Russia, its yields range from 12 to 18 bushels an acre, compared with 30 bushels or more for countries of highly developed agricultural technique like Germany, Belgium and Holland. While wheat represents less than 20% of the farm production of France, it allows the possibility of international comparison.

This low level of productivity has set its stamp on the entire development of French capitalism. The small peasant, to survive, has had to adjust his standard of living to a low scale, which has been reflected in the wages of labor on an international comparison; in addition it has resulted in a domestic market of low purchasing power. Still, even the frugality, thrift and economic conserva-

tism of the small peasant has not been enough to enable him to survive in competition with world agricultural production. He has forced through a system of high protective tariffs which protect his inefficiency.

The battle of 1848, in which English capitalism through its abolition of the tariff on agricultural products, decisively defeated English agriculture, has not even been fought in France, because of the political and economic strength of the peasant. Protected by a high tariff, French foodstuffs and consequently the French cost of living, are consistently above levels of other capitalist countries, and are now the highest in the world, with the new duties. The cost of living about the middle of 1931 was 112% of that of 1928 in France, while in Great Britain it had sunk to 90% and Germany to 91% (no matter how these figures may have been falsified by the official sources from which they are derived, the relation internationally is all that matters here).

France imports foodstuffs to the extent of about 12% of the value of its total imports; England 45%, Germany 31%. At the same time, and as a result, France exports less, proportionately; its total exports are consistently about 55% of those of Great Britain. This apparent self-sufficiency, be it noted, is based on a backward agriculture and a consequently low level of industrial development, restricted to a home market which does not permit of expansion of productivity.

This constitutes a basic contradiction in French economy. The capitalist wants low food prices, a plentiful supply of proletarian labor from ex-peasants, low wages, maximum industrial output, maximum exports; the peasant wants high food prices, must have them to support his economically backward productive technique, and clings to his scrap of land, holding back to the limit of his ability the progress of industrial capitalism. (To Be Continued)

Progress for Jewish Paper

Work for the publication of a semi-monthly paper of the Left Opposition in the Jewish language is well under way. The New York Jewish group of the Communist League (Opposition) held a meeting on December 5th, together with a number of sympathizers and formed an organization with the aim of supporting and spreading the Jewish paper. Close to one hundred dollars was raised in cash and pledges. This group will hold its next meeting on Wednesday, December 16, 8 P. M., at 84 East 10th St. All sympathetic workers are urged to attend this meeting. Comrade Marx Engel is in charge of the work for New York.

In Minneapolis

Comrade Barach, in charge of the work in Minneapolis, writes: "A number of Jewish Communists are willing to actively support the Left Opposition press. Committee chosen to arrange list of names for solicitation, tag day, and party or banquet, the latter in conjunction with Swabec's visit... You many expect funds to roll in very shortly." The spirit of the Minneapolis comrades is quite obvious.

Very much of the same spirit prevails in St. Louis, where comrade Goldberg is in charge of the work. He writes in part: "I was the local manager of the Freiheit for over four years, I know how to carry on this kind of work and you can rest assured that I will be a worker for our semi-monthly paper."

The following comrades are in charge of the work in other localities: Boston, Eva Weiner; Chicago, J. R. Booth; Toronto, Harry Clairmont. We are now in the process of organizing our work in Montreal, Winnipeg, New Haven, Philadelphia, Kansas City and Cleveland. The comrades throughout the country are urged to rush all available funds immediately. Send all funds to: Jewish Propaganda Committee, C. L. A. (Opposition) % M. Lewit 84 East 10th Street, New York, N. Y.

NANKING—November 8—(Fenprecor)

Under the terms of a new conscription law passed by the government last month, 470,000 additional men will be added to the "Nationalist Army" each year for the next three, a total of 1,410,000 additions to the swollen total of men under arms in China who now exceed 3,000,000.

"The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their own ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing conditions. Let the ruling class tremble at a Communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working men of all countries, unite!"—Communist Manifesto.

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