



Insurance For Jobless Depends on Labor

Years of silence to the demands of the workers for social insurance were finally ended in Roosevelt's message to Congress on Friday, June 8. The President has come forward with the promise of some kind of social insurance which will include old age and unemployment benefits.

"... The security of the home, the security of livelihood and the security of social insurance... They constitute a right which belongs to every individual..." says the President. But under what circumstances do these statements appear?

The 73rd Congress is closing its session, having passed no significant social legislation. The prestige of the Recovery program has gone down on the battleground of the class struggle. Labor has received only what it has won in the fiercest struggles. The government has retained popularity mainly through its promises. Those have been used up; and now there are new promises to dwell upon.

But this message reveals more than promises for popularity. For it is also, certainly, the defensive response to militant labor.

Judged at its face value Roosevelt's message is vague and even meaningless. He says directly that he is thinking chiefly of old age and unemployment insurance. It is to be federal in administration, the States cooperating. And "the funds necessary to provide this insurance should be raised by contributions rather than by an increase in general taxation." That is all the information offered.

Roosevelt's Message Reflects Pressure of Discontent

The question for the worker is, why is the President vague about the kind of social insurance he will propose? There are many well known plans for social insurance. And the issues are simple and clear. Who will pay for it? What will be the amount of the benefits? Will they be permanent—for the period of need? Will they apply immediately? Will they accrue to the present millions of unemployed? And will they cover agricultural, professional occupations, etc.? There can be no hedging on these questions—and there can be no doubt of the President's knowledge of them. Two well known unemployment insurance bills, the Wagner Bill and the Lundeen Bill, have been before Congress during the present session. The Old Guard Republicans have been all over the lot to kill any insurance bill. The shrewder politicians, some of whom make up the present administration have waded the Wagner bill, with the fond patronage of William Green, as a blinder, to head off the labor offensive for a real bill. And now at the end of the legislative sessions, with the "Recovery" program washed up, millions still un-

employed, and wages, as always, dependent upon the militancy and efficiency of the strike, Roosevelt comes before a retiring Congress with those professional accents of sincerity, and says "Next winter... social insurance... looking for a sound means which I can recommend."

There is a reason for this vagueness and demagoguery. There is "social unrest". Last summer there was pretty talk about "collective bargaining", which became troops, gas and bullets to prevent anyone from taking that cordiality too seriously. The Roosevelt administration is the most demagogic in American history; pious and brutal, smiling and deadly. "Collective bargaining" became company unions when labor did not fight, or was not strong enough, or was sold out.

What will social insurance become? It will become what the workers make it. The words "social insurance" were wrung out of Roosevelt by the grip of an aroused working class. Between now and next winter the government hopes for a period of respite. But to obtain actual relief, the working class must present its own demands for social insurance and immediately build the united front of labor that will push it over. The A. F. of L., the independent unions, unemployed organizations, and the political parties of the labor movement must act together for this objective.

The employers and their government must make the "contributions". The benefits must provide a good standard of living. They must be as permanent as unemployment. They must apply immediately and to the existing unemployed.

—D. B.

Comrade Cannon's article in his series discussing the Minneapolis strike had to be omitted this week because of his absence from the city. It will appear in the next issue.

Longshoremen Refuse Surrender

Despite the settlement signed by Thos. Ryan for the Seattle longshoremen all cargo movements have been blocked by the strikers. Thus the first efforts to open the Seattle waterfront failed. Pickets sat on the tracks in front of a locomotive dispatched to switch freight cars and refused to move. In the San Francisco Bay Region the local I.L.A. has addressed an appeal to all local unions to join in a general strike in its support. Several unions have voted favorably at this time. There are all indications that the combined efforts of the Chambers of Commerce, the ship owners, the mediators and the international officials of the Longshoremen's Union to

Union Barred at NRA Office

The attitude of the NRA administration towards unions has again been demonstrated—in its own house. When the workers in the NRA Labor Advisory Board attempted to take advantage of section 7a of the NRA and organized into the NRA Employees Union, Lodge 91, General Johnson called the organizer of the union into his office and discharged him for "insubordination".

"The little NRA union", said John Donovan, the president, "has received exactly the same dirty deal as the auto workers, the steel workers and every other group of workers who have come to General Johnson seeking justice."

The union demanded recognition, abandonment of overtime, compensatory time off for overtime, more equitable reclassification and remedying of specific cases of discrimination.

The workers are beginning to learn from their own bitter experience that they can expect nothing from the NRA. Only by reliance upon their own strength can they hope to win recognition from the bosses government. This lesson is being learnt by every group of workers who have attempted to establish a union and win recognition and the right of collective bargaining.

Steel Workers Union Retreats Strike Plans Deferred

The steel strike has been postponed. None of the issues which gave rise to the strike plans have been settled. None of the demands made by the union have been met by the steel masters or even given serious consideration by them. In

New Deal Marches Ahead



Steel Workers Union Retreats Strike Plans Deferred

other words, a test of strength is held in abeyance. None of these issues can be considered settled until the union is recognized as the authentic spokesman of the workers—that means when it actually exists as a factor capable of enforcing the demands of the workers. At the Pittsburgh convention of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel, and Tin Workers, held last week to take final action on the strike proposition, the delegates accepted a proposal for a retreat submitted by William Green. This meek Baptist deacon from Conshohocken, Ohio appeared before the steel delegates and delivered what is said to be the strongest plea of his career. His plea was against action, against a test of strength, against a strike to obtain the demands made by the workers. When appearing in such a role Bill Green seems growing in stature. His plea was not challenged, otherwise he would easily have become rattled and incoherent. As it was he could convey to the delegates his idea to put their faith, not in the power of organization, but in President Roosevelt.

Bill Green's Proposal

That was the proposition accepted by the steel workers' convention. It recommends the setting up of an impartial board of three members to be appointed by President Roosevelt. This board is to: Adjust complaints of violations of the code for the Iron and Steel industry; mediate and conciliate disputes between employers and employees; undertake to arrange for a conference for collective bargaining with the employers; arbitrate labor disputes submitted to it voluntarily; hear and determine matters of discrimination against the workers. In addition this board is to have the authority to hold elections in the steel plants to determine workers' representatives for collective bargaining.

The proposal accepted by the convention finally declares that in the event the above recommendations are accepted by all parties the strike was to be declared off. Such was the proposition offered by Bill Green, and, of course, he could not

give the slightest assurance as to whether it would be accepted or even considered by the steel corporations. In sum and substance this proposition is the same as the infamous automobile settlement which helped to put over.

What will the outcome be? To the steel trust it means that the threat of a strike is removed and it can go ahead with its unbridled exploitation, fearing no challenge to its coercive methods of company unionism. It can permit itself an even greater defiance than before and help stiffen the backbone of the struggle against union organization elsewhere.

What Was Lacking?

To these workers a union of their own, firmly established, will have real meaning. But the surrender made at the Pittsburgh convention will undoubtedly have a disheart-

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French Labor Parties Ignore Storm Signals

Reaction grips Europe. France, caught in the claws of the economic crisis—a chaotic budget, the decline of small commerce, the deterioration of the workers' standard, the impoverishment of the peasants—is the storm center. On the courage and the course of its proletariat depends not only the future of France but—perhaps for years, the future of the whole working class. The descendants of the Communards are not without courage; the events of Feb. 6th-12th have shown some of their power. But in France, today, there is no party capable of leading the proletariat to victory. There is the nucleus for such a party—the Feb. 6th and 12th events demonstrated—the French Communist League. The day after tomorrow, it must become such a party.

Clashes in the streets of important cities between workers' and fascist reactionaries take place almost daily. The workers stand their ground. Reaction retaliates. At this moment Comrade Trotsky is being hounded still, compelled to move from place to place. The reactionary aim is to paralyze his activities, to separate him completely from the working class.

The official Communist Party shows progressive decay; in 1920 the majority of the Socialist Party, 130,000 strong, joined the Comintern; today the Stalinites have 12,000 members. Political degeneracy takes its toll. A short period after its origin, the C.G.T.U. (red union) had 400,000 members while today there remain 70,000. Meanwhile, the C.G.T. (reformist unions), headed by the Compters of France, Jouhaux, has a membership of 1,000,000.

Decisive Issues Moving to the Fore

But, for a revolutionary party, questions of theory, strategy, and tactics play the decisive role. They cannot be postponed or remain unanswered. Let us look at the "hollow men" of Stalinism, facing the growing fascist elements and remembering that an empty barrel rolling down a hill makes a tremendous rumpus.

The Croix du Feu, the Jeunesse Patriote, the noisy disciples of the Action Francaise, are organizing. The "Trotskyites" call for the united front of all working-class organizations. They propose local committees of action in all industries; a general labor defense corps (workers militia); and of course the right to mutual criticism by all participating organizations. The C. P. refuses, proclaiming that only under its leadership can a united front be constituted. The S. P. and other working-class organiza-

tions accept—but the pressure grows. The C. P. reconsiders. It offers to enter the united front with the Socialist Party on these conditions: that it must be organized under the auspices of the Amsterdam International against War and Fascism; exclude the Trotskyites, etc. The S. P. refuses because it will not accept the Barbusse leadership in advance; and it answers that the Trotskyites represent an important political tendency in the labor movement. Then from within the C. P. ranks Doriot raises his voice for the united front policy.

The Danger of False Slogans

On the streets, during the February days, the Stalinists raised the slogan of "Down with the government of Daladier-Frot, the murderers of workers" (the identical slogan of the fascist elements). And on Feb. 8th, L'Humanite comments: "... certain comrades show an entirely incomprehensible excitement concerning the fascist turmoil in the streets." The C. P. did not even understand the events. As a result it experienced further decline while the Socialist Party made gains.

Nor is the "case of Doriot" unstructive in relation to the decay of the C. P. and the Comintern. Doriot learned from the Feb. 6-12 events. His experience in the work of organizing the anti-fascist front in St. Denis forced him to come out against the Central Committee, against the stupidity of "united front from below only", against Thorez, and Cachin. Thorez remarked quite honestly: "If we accept his (Doriot's) evaluation of the present situation we compromise the whole of our political line pursued hitherto." By resigning his majority of St. Denis, Doriot forced the hand of the party Central Committee. Running on his own platform, the workers reelected him by an overwhelming majority. But the Stalinists had a comeback. They called a convention of their sections of Northern France, for the purpose of dealing with Doriot. They registered 110 votes for their condemnation of Doriot's position and 69 against. The convention vote was secured by allotting the same vote to each unit, regardless of its size. The numerically powerful units of St. Denis could record no more strength than the small units. However, he refused to make a pilgrimage to Moscow in order to be instructed in the tactic of the "united front from below". Ironically enough, the first name signed to the ukase expelling Doriot was that of Dimitroff.

And in the Socialist Party

The Socialist Party of France, at its recent convention, held in Toulouse, May 20th through May 23rd, revealed nothing new. The party, since the split-off of the extreme right wing, remains in the hands of the "centrists" under the leadership of Blum and Faure. The days of "democracy" in France are about at an end. Fascism is advancing. A Marxist party would go over to the offensive. But not the S. P. The lessons from the German and Austrian events had no appreciable effects on the convention, except that the uselessness of an "armed insurrection" was broached. True, under the pressure of these events and in order to appease the left-wing elements, there was some gibbering about "radical decisive action." The united front policy of the "Administrative committee" was approved. But on a whole they were more concerned about the parliamentary elections next October. It did not occur to them that the time may soon come when there will be no more ballot boxes. A resolution against any "further" appropriations for war was passed—no realistic consideration of the tasks of a working-class party in relation to war. The leftward moving groups who had quit or been expelled (the right-wing had split off in the latter part of last year) were invited to return. A resolution condemning any bloc with the radical bourgeoisie slid through. A few lamentations over Renaudel—the right wing leader—barely anything on the reactionary leaders of the trade-unions—and the convention ended. The S. P. remains a hopelessly reformist organization. The militants must be won over to Communism.

Fight to Oust Wolinsky

The French Communist League, which took the leadership in the united front proposals in the formation of workers' alliances, gains prestige in the French labor movement. To the questions of the proletariat it gives Marxian answers. Under the banner of the Fourth International, it will rally the workers of France for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. Forward, International Communists of France!

—A. R.

Recovery For the Farmer

After the first year of the New Deal the American farmers are beginning to become disillusioned with its "recovery" program. The high prices for farm products which was to follow automatically from an artificially induced economy of curtailment of production has failed to materialize and the farmers find themselves holding the sack.

At the end of 1933 the year's index showed a gain of only 3% over 1932. In July 1933 the purchasing power of the farmers' dollar had fallen to 71 cents, in January 1934 it was down to 60 cents, while for February it was recorded at 64 cents.

Bad times did not set in for the farmer in 1920 at the time of the general crisis of capitalism but fully ten years earlier. Depression in agriculture set in almost immediately after the world war. All the evidences of a depressed economy were present: falling prices, land value deflation, heavy mortgages and the ever growing pressure of fixed charges (taxes, interests on debts, etc.). The farmers largely disappeared as purchasers of capital goods and a characteristic contradiction of capitalist economy made its appearance; agriculture became more efficient as a system of production as its gross income declined.

One Example of Curtailed Production

Cotton was a typical item in the agricultural "recovery" program. One fourth of the 1933 crop was plowed under and the acreage was reduced from 41,000,000 acres to 30,000,000 acres. But the New Dealers found out that acreage reduction was by no means synonymous with yield reduction. Inten-

sive cultivation and the use of fertilizer was applied and the yield per acre jumped from the five year average of a 174 pounds to a yield of 209 pounds for 1933. The year crop was 13,177,000 bales and was fully equal to that of 1932. From the standpoint of American production alone the farmer was no better off than before. Drastic reduction in the United States spurred producers elsewhere to increase enormously their planting. As a result the total of foreign cotton production reached the highest point since the pre-depression days 1927-28. Nor has the worst happened yet. Plans are going ahead for the opening up of vast cotton regions in India and Africa.

Since the price of cotton is determined by the world production rather than that of any single country it can be seen that the world position of American cotton is worse now than ever before. Net results in other commodities produced by agriculture will be likewise affected. Perhaps, the farmers began to sense this to see through the "national planning" demagoguery of the A.A.A. hence their quiet but effective sabotaging of the whole thing.

Who Pays the Price?

Acreage reduction in wheat for the 1934 crop fell short by fully half of the administration's plans. Reduction in acreage had cost the consumers (largely the workers) \$150,000,000 in processing taxes and netted to the overwhelming mass of farmers no substantial gains. The American farmer began to wake up to the fact that national boundaries are largely arbitrary and not of much use where production for a market is con-

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ORGANIZATION & PRESS DRIVE

We are on our way to new gains. The first results of our campaign to create a fund to build the organization and its press are at hand. The first steps to carry out this immediate objective have been taken. Two capable organizers have been selected to take up work in the field. The first issue of the theoretical organ, THE NEW INTERNATIONAL is off the press.

Two new branches have been added to the League in the last few weeks. In the Richmond, California, oil field branch already reported is making headway. Now a large branch has been built up in Detroit composed of a number of comrades who are deeply entrenched in the trade unions. The Cleveland branch is strengthened with a field organizer giving his attention to the Cleveland-Pittsburgh territory. In Minneapolis the strike victory has created new opportunities for the League. Two two new field organizers are to be assigned to Minneapolis and Detroit respectively.

Its contents will become increasingly popularized to represent ever more of a mass agitation paper. But it must be stabilized, take in a wider field and have more material of interest to the average worker. These are the objectives for which we intend to use the organization and press fund. We call upon you to help. Through collective efforts we can march forward to new and greater gains. Never before has the need been so pressing and the opportunities so favorable. The creation of a revolutionary movement is the issue.

Do not delay! If you have already received a coupon book for this campaign, containing ten coupons at 10c each, make haste to dispose of them and settle the account with the office. If you have not received one, will you forward your request to us? If you can advance a dollar or more for one or more coupon books, so much the better. But at any rate we count upon you. Send all your orders and your funds to THE MILITANT, 126 East 16th Street, New York City.

More indispensable than ever is THE MILITANT.

New York.—In the Militant of April 20th issue we reported how Wolinsky the agent of the bosses is saving the New York pocketbook workers' union. Now we will give an analysis of what took place since.

How the Union Officials Work for the Bosses

How is it that at a time when there is a general talk of reducing hours and of raising wages the pocketbook bosses are demanding a lowering of conditions? The answer is that our misleaders did not enforce the rotten agreements they signed with the employers for the last few years. The agreement provides that the scale of mechanics should be \$32 and \$35.50. In most of the shops this scale was not enforced.

Moreover, the code that was signed by the Wolinsky administration did not change working conditions in the trade. Hours and wages remained the same. The pocketbook workers are still working 40 hours a week. Why? Because the present officials work hand in hand with the bosses.

At a time when there is such great unemployment in the industry. At a time when wages have been reduced from 40 to 50 per cent. Out of 4,000 pocketbook workers in New York, only 1,500 have jobs and they work only part time during the season. Is it a wonder that the employers rejoiced when Wolinsky became legal adviser of the union? They know how Wolinsky advised them to fight the union when he was manager of the Morris White firm and how he helped to throw out 110 workers in the same shop. Wolinsky made a statement that he "made" the union and he will break it. The bosses cannot have a better

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