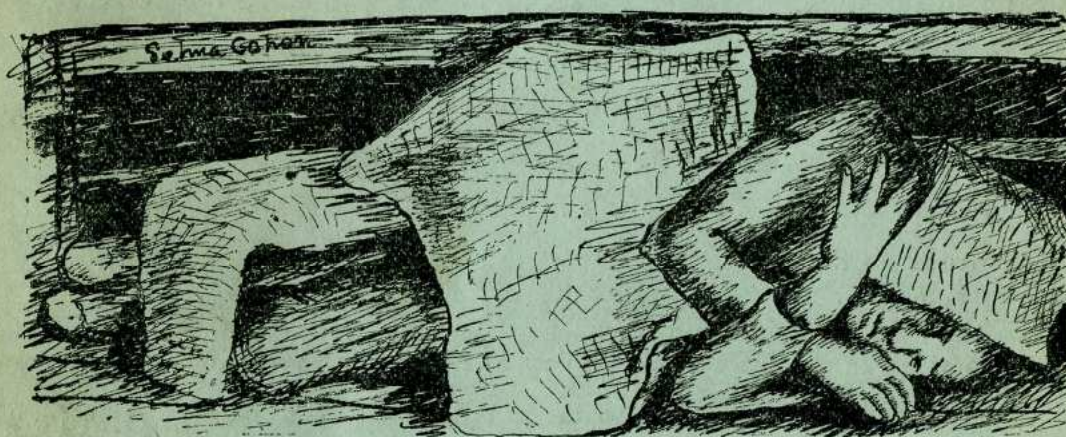


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# FORGOTTEN MEN, WHAT NOW?

BY ABE BLUESTEIN



NEW DEAL "SECURITY"

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## FORGOTTEN MEN, WHAT NOW?

Roosevelt's New Deal has lifted this country from the low depths of March, 1933, during its two-year existence. For more than a year the Chief Executive has been telling us that our troubles are over, that "we're out of the red." On the basis of this claim, he pretends to have redeemed his pledge of remembering the Forgotten Man. But the longer his New Deal exists, the more perplexed the Forgotten man. The more the president points to the achievements of his administration, the angrier the great masses of forgotten people throughout the land.

Roosevelt was elected because he remembered the Forgotten Man. To whom was he appealing? The most superficial analysis of the period shows that such a slogan literally applied to the whole nation. After three years of depression, business was operating at a loss; property and mortgage holders felt values slipping through their fingers; bankers saw their loans turning sour; transportation and production were at a fraction of their former activity; farmers disposed of their crops at a loss and faced the loss of their farms through foreclosure of unpaid mortgages; workers still employed took wage-cuts and felt powerless to resist; over 14,000,000 workers were totally unemployed and faced the present and future without even the means for keeping themselves and their families alive.

Under these circumstances all sections of the population, all classes in society, nursed grievances. Each needed a helping hand, each felt neglected — forgotten. Consequently, Roosevelt's happy phrases about the Forgotten Man appealed to all. It was his magic key into the portals of the White House.

Supported by all in his campaign, to whom did Roosevelt give a helping hand? The Forgotten Man, of course! The more he talked of security for the Common Man, the more business began to haul in the profits. The more "justice" was established for the laboring man, by way of "rights" to organize and "minimum" wages, the higher went prices, the higher leaped profits. The more he talked of the More Abundant Life, the steeper the degradation and the lower the standard of living to which the great mass of unemployed, the Common Folk, were condemned.

And the greater the misery of the "common" people, the workers and farmers, professionals and white collar workers, the more Roosevelt says "we're out of the red." What of it? What about the Forgotten MAN you were talking about two years ago? Have you forgotten him already, Mr. Roosevelt? Or is your Forgotten Man a dollar sign (\$) in a bank book? Do you know that there are men in this country, Mr. Roosevelt, men and women and children who lack food and clothing and shelter? That they hunger for the good things of life which they know America has the capacity to produce? These people once looked to you for help. Today they are bewildered, befuddled, confused. They don't know where to turn or what to do.



Forgotten Men, your saviors betrayed you for a pot of gold! Your leaders stabbed you in the back. Your representatives in Congress have in the past, are at present, and will in the future betray your interests because all governments under capitalism have the primary function of defending private property. And the interests of property conflict with the interests of the Common Man. Forgotten Men of America, in the light of these considerations, we ask, WHAT NOW?

We, the Libertarian workers of America, call upon you, the Forgotten Men of America, to turn your backs upon saviors and leaders. We call upon you to learn the true nature and scope of the problems that face you. We urge you to organize and solve those problems yourselves.

#### HOW MUCH UNEMPLOYMENT IS THERE ACTUALLY IN AMERICA?

On the basis of a national survey, the National Research League estimates that "out of every five workers in the United States, two are employed, two unemployed, and one partly employed." This ratio is based upon final employment estimates for November, 1934, which follows.

17,000,000 fully employed  
14,420,000 completely unemployed  
7,250,000 partly employed

According to this survey, approximately 45 per cent of total labor-time in the United States is lost never to be redeemed. The products of that labor which was not used is forever lost to the American people.

#### WHAT CHANCE HAVE THE UNEMPLOYED OF EVER GETTING BACK INTO INDUSTRY?

None! Despite Roosevelt, his Brain Trust, his social workers, his New Deal, his AAA, CCC, PWA, CWA, TVA, WPA, ERB and any other possible combinations of the alphabet, everything points to the existence of a permanent unemployed army of more than 12 million. All talk of liquidating unemployment by restoring prosperity is so much nonsense. The president's efforts to raise prices to the 1923-1925 level have succeeded in raising prices and thereby profits. But the number of unemployed has risen with the profits! Even if business again reached its 1929 physical volume of work and services, it would employ 2,500,000 fewer workers than in 1929, so greatly has the productivity per worker increased. (National Research League)

The International Labor Office, in its study, "Hours of Work and Unemployment", published at the end of 1932, found that the productivity per worker in the United States had increased during the years 1919-1927 in the following industries picked at random as follows:

- 1) Transport, an increase of 13 per cent;
- 2) Paper Industry, an increase of 33 per cent;
- 3) Mines, an increase of 41 per cent;
- 4) Cement, an increase of 53 per cent;
- 5) Iron and Steel, an increase of 55 per cent;
- 6) Flour Mills, an increase of 67 per cent;
- 7) Cane Sugar Refining, an increase of 71 per cent;



- 8) Petroleum Refining, an increase of 88 per cent;
- 9) Automobile, an increase of 97 per cent;
- 10) Rubber Tire, an increase of 163 per cent.

In the face of such evidence, we are not surprised to find approximately 3,000,000 unemployed during the peak year of prosperity, 1929. (The New York Times, Jan. 17, 1933, reported Roosevelt as quoting "one of America's leading economists" that there were "well over 3,000,000 out of work in 1929.")

When we add to the 3,500,000 unemployed in 1929 and 2,500,000 displaced by technological improvements since 1929, the 4,000,000 young workers who never yet had a job, plus the undoubted increase of 2,000,000 more young workers before 1929 activity can possibly be reached (National Research League calculations), we face the appalling truth that under the most favorable circumstances even conceivable (the attainment of the most prosperous level in the history of this country), 12,000,000 wage earners, with dependents, equalling 20,000,000, will be without a source of livelihood other than the beggarly handouts of the government.

And when we stop to realize that the achievement of the 1929 level of work and services is purely hypothetical and impossible of attainment so long as 12,000,000 people do remain unemployed and mass purchasing power is so greatly reduced, then 12,000,000 is an underestimate of what the future actually offers to the workers of America so long as capitalism is permitted to exist.

Faced with such an overwhelming army of unemployed, the powers that be have been forced to take action, fearing the unemployed might take matters into their own hands. The government and the master-class have adopted a policy of "helping" the unemployed. The sudden reversal of traditional government policies on such fundamental questions as rugged individualism, interfering in the private lives of law-abiding American citizens, regulation of business, etc., appears on the surface to be concern over the welfare of the common people. But is it?

#### WHAT IS BEING DONE TO HELP THE UNEMPLOYED?

Much too little! So little that for the first time in the history of our "free" and "democratic" republic, a whole class of free citizens are being consciously and deliberately condemned to a sub-subsistence level of existence by official acts of the government.

While talking about the More Abundant Life and Security For All, the only abundance the government is busily spreading is the abundance of meager handouts to its citizens — the only security is that of being fastened to a sub-standard of living.

#### a - Emergency Relief for the Hungry!

From the very beginning standards of relief were determined by the strain upon property rather than the needs of the unemployed. As reported by Miss Katherine F. Lenroot, Chief of the United States Children's Bureau, "The average amount of relief per month (is) as low as as \$8.23 in the



state with the lowest average, and (reaches) only \$42.36 in the state with the highest average." Comparing these two extremes of the bounteous relief handed out by the states of the wealthiest nation in the world with the standards established for food alone by Stiebeling and Ward's "Diets at Four Levels of Nutritive Content and Cost" for a family of 4 for a year, we see the wretched meagerness and absolute starvation to which the unemployed of this country are condemned. The table follows:

	per year	month
Restricted Diet for Emergency Use .....	\$244.00	\$20.33
Adequate Diet at Minimum Cost .....	340.00	28.33
Adequate Diet at Moderate Cost .....	560.00	46.66
Liberal Diet .....	660.00	55.00

Considering that food is not supposed to take more than 40 per cent of a worker's income, we see at once that the Restricted Diet for Emergency Use (not permanent use!) is above the means of the most fortunate unemployed getting the highest relief allowance in the country. As for the great majority of the unemployed, no one can say how they manage to keep alive.

The results of such a policy have already left their impress upon the children of the unemployed. In Pennsylvania, a survey by the Emergency Child Health Committee found 30 per cent of the children of families receiving relief to be suffering from malnutrition. From the above brief survey we see what relief the unemployed have been receiving up to the present from the New Deal and what can be expected from it in the future.

#### **b - Work Relief to the Rescue!**

Having failed so miserably to take care of the unemployed while waiting for the return of prosperity, Roosevelt has finally undertaken to restore the unemployed to useful occupations and raise their standard of living again. But despite all the ballyhoo, the unvarnished truth that wages would range from \$19 per month to \$94 per month for the most skilled workers in the largest cities, has started a protest movement among the unemployed throughout the nation whose scope will go far beyond that of any movement of the past. For the first time the unemployed see clearly where all promises lead. For the first time they realize how far they are from even that "minimum health and decency budget" prepared by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. For Roosevelt has decreed that the cost per man on a works project shall not exceed \$1,100 per year, including materials. The "minimum health and decency budget" ranges from \$1,662 to \$2,161 in the various cities throughout the land.

And when the unemployed will realize that this is the supreme effort of the New Deal, they will see the necessity of closing their ranks, creating their organizations, and fighting to wrest from an unwilling government and a close-fisted master class the necessary means for a decent living.

We welcome the Work Relief Projects for one reason only; it will give us, the unemployed of America, a chance to get together in large numbers



and thus help to join our scattered strength into One Huge Force and take what rightfully belongs to us.

**c - Reemployment in Private Industry**

Frankly acknowledging that it will not be possible to raise \$4.8 billions each year to keep the unemployed at work, the administration is resorting to a lot of wishful announcements to the effect that the works projects will restore activity and prosperity to private industry, which will then restore the great army of the unemployed to their former jobs. But we saw above that this is forever impossible under present conditions because constant technological improvements continue to throw workers out of industry, and because the labor supply is being continually increased by the influx of young workers. The one method of reabsorbing the unemployed into private industry, namely, shorter hours, is foredoomed to failure so long as the initiative remains in the hands of the government (even a "New Deal" government!) and the master class. The master class has always fiercely resisted all attempts at shortening of hours. (May First is the outcome of such a struggle for the 8 hour day led by the Anarchists of that period.) The administration has shown a cool hostility to the only type of measure that really takes a step toward reducing unemployment: the Black-Connery 30 hour bill.

This does not surprise us, who understood from the very beginning the true nature of Roosevelt's demagogic administration. And it will teach increasingly larger numbers of the workers, employed and unemployed, that they cannot depend upon the governments of capitalist countries to really care for their needs and demands. The workers, employed and unemployed, must use their organized power to wrest from the government, just as they do from the bosses, those demands that are needed at the time. To depend upon congressional or executive action from the government is to be forever doomed to disastrous delays, hypocrisies, and finally, stark betrayal.

**Workers! Don't depend upon leaders and representatives. Trust only yourselves and your organized might!**

**d - Social Security For All!**

Behind the smoke screen of this ambitious and worthy slogan, the administration has just passed a Social Security Bill whose provisions are so woefully inadequate as to make the whole effort comical and actually incongruous in the face of the present situation. Confining the discussion to the unemployment provisions of the bill, we see that the New Deal Administration, that New Deal of the More Abundant Life and Security For All, refused absolutely to take the initiative to provide for unemployment insurance. Enlightened Washington throws the full burden of initiating such insurance upon the more backward capitals of the individual states. At a time when the problem of unemployment looms so large on the national horizon, the federal government throws the burden of solution upon the states. Besides the obvious danger of getting 48 different varieties of insurance within the boundaries of a single nation, the unemployed face the



much more obvious possibility of being ignored completely by many of the backward and reactionary states. As it is, only 5 of the 30 states that considered unemployment insurance bills this year passed it.

The broad outlines of the insurance bill are built upon a scheme that might have been plausible at a time when there was no mass unemployment of a permanent character. It provides for the creation of a fund and payment to beneficiaries of only certain categories of industry, and for a limited period only, when unemployed.

Such payments for limited periods are of course valueless in an epoch of permanent unemployment. Funds of similar nature in other countries, which were built during the previous years of relative stability, could not stand the strain of mass unemployment such as we are experiencing today.

What chance, then, has this country to build up sufficient reserves to take care of the unemployed of the future? None whatever!

What provision is made for the 14,590,000 unemployed of today and of the 20,000,000 on relief, in this scheme of "social security"? None whatever!

They probably expect the Forgotten People of America to starve to death long before the united states of America each has its own system of unemployment insurance!

#### IF THE GOVERNMENT AND OUR MASTERS WILL NOT HELP US, WHAT MUST WE DO?

The most important problem of the unemployed is the question of support, relief or unemployment insurance. And there is only one agency to whom we can turn: the government, which is supposed to represent the whole of organized society. It is impossible to turn to industry for support, since it has already refused such support even in exchange for our labor. Nor can we turn to trade unions for help for at least two reasons:

- 1) Only a small minority of the workers of this country ever belonged to any trade union.
- 2) Such trade union funds, built solely from workers' contributions, could never support the heavy burden of permanent mass unemployment.
- 3) A third, and ethical reason, is that it is unfair for workers, who never enjoy the real benefits of industry (profits, huge salaries, etc.), to bear the full brunt of the collapse of industry.

Therefore we must turn to the government for some measure of security from starvation.

#### HOW SHALL WE PRESS OUR DEMANDS UPON THE GOVERNMENT? WHAT DEMANDS SHALL WE MAKE?

The Socialists and Communists offer the traditional method of pressing our demands: elect our representatives to Congress and we will pass a law. This is the first vital error that the workers of most European countries have made — the first step in a development which eventually led to fascism and the destruction of all workers' rights and organizations in such countries as Italy, Germany, and Austria. For wherever workers' representatives were elected to capitalist governments, they defended, with an



inevitable and depressing uniformity, the interests of private property. (Which is the primary function of capitalist governments.) against the interests of their worker constituents.

But the peculiar situation in the current American scene makes the efforts of the Communists and Socialists so ludicrous that it would be highly comical were it not for its tragic implications.

Although this is the sixth year of the Great Depression, the Communists and Socialists are as far today as they ever were from electing a representative or representatives to Congress. Neither of them even imagine they could elect the necessary majority required for passing their Social Insurance Bill.

That both of them acknowledge the truth of this is implied in the renewed slogan for a Labor Party. Both call today for a Labor Party in the face of the long long history of impotence and betrayals on the part of the Labor Party in England (Which reduced existing unemployment insurance benefits in 1931 when they were in office, and broke the General Strike of 1926, to mention only two Labor Party actions) and the corresponding Social Democratic parties of Europe. The call for a reformistic Labor Party is the first step of a great inevitable betrayal of our interests. Why? We need only to learn the lessons of the experience of our brothers in other countries to learn why. Our representatives in Congress must be practical folk if they are to secure certain reforms. When they are practical, they see the necessity of making concessions, political trades with other parties behind closed doors, in order to win concessions. But the concessions they make are concessions to our masters, concessions that must be against our interests.

But our argument is based on the premise that such a labor Party is successful in sending its representatives to Congress. Our whole political history points to the failure of all third party movements in the past, even though they had far wider support than the present effort is likely to have. However, even if we look further ahead than the coming elections next year and grant some sort of success for the more distant future, How will that help us now in our efforts to win not only more adequate relief but also a system of social security? Parliamentary campaigns are slow and cumbersome affairs, subject to the arbitrary dictates of Time. The loss of one campaign may not be too serious for the well-to-do, who can more than manage to live until the next campaign two or four or six years later. But the loss of one campaign for the workers may be a matter of almost life and death if they have placed all their faith and energies into it and do not have an alternative method of defending their interests and struggling for their rights.

Therefore we say that the politicians of the Communist and Socialist Parties, are fostering self-defeating illusions upon the workers and farmers of America, employed and unemployed, when they call for a Labor Party as the vehicle of struggle for immediate demands.

(A much fuller discussion of the whole problem of a Labor Party will be found in our forthcoming pamphlet on the Labor Party.)



But the Communists and Socialists are too clever to wait for their own representatives to get into Congress before introducing a social insurance bill. They were afraid they might have to wait too long. At this point the tragic comedy enters upon the scene.

Mr. Lundeen, only Farmer-Labor representative in the House of Representatives, was chosen as the appointed instrument to effect a major legislative victory in Washington. With no strength of their own in Congress even to make compromising coalitions, they choose a former "social fascist", Mr. Lundeen, the sole responsible agent of the suffering workers and farmers. Mr. Lundeen introduces the Lundeen Bill, known as H. R. 2827. Gallantly he fights for its enactment. Persistently and courageously the Communist Party backs him up, in its press, at meetings and demonstrations, at the National Congress for Unemployment Insurance held in Washington (!). The Socialist Party endorses the bill, A. F. of L. locals endorse the bill, hundreds of locals endorse it, thousands of locals, whole unions endorse it..... and the bill dies quietly in the sub-committee of the House Committee of Labor!

Now that the smoke has cleared away, we want to ask the Communists and Socialists, Why did you do it? When the average worker in the union takes such a step, we can understand it. He still believes in the process of bourgeois democracy. He still thinks democratic government reflects the will of the majority in a democratic manner. But that you, you who understand the nature of the class struggle and the role of all governments under capitalism, should endorse the measure in such manner and bend all your energies to the task of enlisting the broad masses of workers in support of the bill is beyond all understanding.

**Why did you do it?**

1) **To get the Bill Passed?** You must have known, you must have been absolutely certain, that the bill would never be enacted into law. With no representatives of your own in Congress, and with only one representative of the the milk-and-water-far-from red Farmer Labor Party, you knew that the bill had no chance.

2) Then you must have done it for the good old Social - Democratic reason: **you wanted to use Congress as a national platform, a forum for the nation.** But even for this limited goal, you were extremely utopian for a realistic party such as you claim to be. Congress might serve you as a national platform if you had speakers upon the platform. But you had none! And surely you must have known that, under the committee system of legislative activity, all undesirable bills can be killed in committee before it ever gets to the floor, especially so when such bills have no support in Congress itself.

You must also know that all movements that seek to get something out of Congress — and even the "national platform" approach must proceed under the guise of getting reforms out of Congress — imply by that very act that Congress reflects the will of the people democratically. All



campaigns for the adoption of one's program in Congress, whether through election of candidates or through the "mass pressure" of petitions and endorsed resolutions, only help strengthen the illusions of the average worker in the democratic nature of our government. At a time when the ordinary politician is regarded cynically, the radical parties, the generous parties that fight for the poor and the downtrodden, serve doubly well in upholding the fast falling illusions of democracy under capitalism. However, one might understand the motives of a revolutionary party which was willing to risk strengthening illusions of democracy in return for the privilege of using the national legislature as a national platform from which to address the entire nation. The exchange might hurt in the long run (As the Anarchists always claimed, and as post-war history has so tragically proven), but the immediate prospects are too brilliant to worry over the future.

When a revolutionary party assumes the task of supporting such illusions in the democratic nature of Congress, without the slightest chance of using Congress as a national platform, either for itself or for its program, then that party has either deliberately assumed the role of a counter-revolutionary agency, or grown so irresponsible and careless in its work, that it must be forever shunned and avoided by sincere workers seeking a correct program of action and demands. The Communist Party is in just such a position today.

Without the slightest hope of passing it, and without any possibility of being able to use Congress as a national platform for its program, it has used its own organs and institutions to prop up faith in Congress as a deliverer by urging the workers and farmers to pass resolutions calling upon Congress to enact H.R.2827. Instead of exploiting Congress as a national platform, it transformed itself into a national forum for the support of bourgeois democracy.

Granting for the sake of argument that the Lundeen Bill represents the correct demands for the unemployed, the method of presenting these demands puts the unemployed in a peculiar and untenable position.

Who are the unemployed? To the masters of industry and government, they are a terrible weight and an unjust burden. To the unemployed they are a class of living human beings who have suddenly been deprived of the means of making a living, involuntarily out of work. Although they never controlled the policies and destinies of industry, at least they shared to a limited degree in its fortune. Today they neither control nor share the fortunes of industry. They are just hungry.

Under the circumstances, any attempt to link up their demands for some measure of security with concern for the conduct of our economic and financial system is outright betrayal of the unemployed. This is precisely the position of the unemployed and their champions who follow the policy of advocating a specific unemployment insurance law. This is precisely the position of the backers of the Lundeen Bill. The supporters of this bill have the double burden of proving that its demands are just demands, and also



that its provisions for raising funds are more beneficial for capitalism than any other method of raising funds. They do not deem it sufficient to demand that the funds be raised from income, inheritance and gift taxes because these sources are the most capable of bearing the burden. They must prove to Congress (a capitalist Congress) that its method of raising funds is superior to the creation of reserves because it is more beneficial to capitalism. "Would not, then, the building up of reserves on an extensive enough basis to make any impression at all on the problem of unemployment greatly complicate the credit structure of American industry?" asks Mary Van Kleeck, defending the Lundeen Bill in a debate with I. M. Rubinow in the New Masses, Jan. 1, 1935. (Emphasis ours.) Is Miss Van Kleeck so concerned about the "credit structure of American Industry", in other words, American Capitalism? Not necessarily. But she is concerned about the passage of the Lundeen Bill. She is so desperately concerned that she must reduce the whole case for unemployment insurance to the level at which it might interest the government, and the very masters who had already refused to support us even in exchange for our labor: she must prove that "our" bill is more beneficial to them than their own mistaken policies. Regardless of the merits or demerits of her argument, she has destroyed the very basis of the case for the unemployed. By shifting her position from just demands and absolute necessity to that of efficacy, she has destroyed her own defense. For whereas the vital distress of the unemployed is clear to all and cannot be questioned, policies can be debated back and forth interminably when evaluated for their efficacy. Reduced to a question of efficacy, our masters might be willing to adopt a less beneficial course to themselves if it involved rescuing certain fundamental and strategic principles.

Thus, they would undoubtedly be willing to risk the future complication of their credit structure if, to do that, they could reject the sweeping provisions of the Lundeen Bill.

But this is not the only surrender forced upon the unemployed by advocacy of the Lundeen Bill. Not only must they go to great lengths to prove that the bill is advantageous to the financial interests of the country (the guardians of our credit structure, Morgan, Rockefeller, etc.), but they must concern themselves with questions of constitutionality. But, after all, was unemployment, involuntary unemployment, provided for in the constitution? How could the framers of the constitution have foreseen or even imagined, that the time would come when people who were willing to work would be forced to remain idle, when people would be condemned to starvation in the midst of plenty? Why, then, should the unemployed look to the constitution for help?

Evidently there are doubts in the minds of the protagonists of the Lundeen Bill as to its constitutionality. "By making this (income taxes) the source of funds", says Miss Van Kleeck in the above-mentioned debate, "the Workers' Bill should appear to be beyond question as to its constitutionality. What would remain to be confirmed as constitutional would be the right to spend this money through insurance." (Emphasis ours.)



Now the whole monstrosity of the thing is out. The bill is brought before Congress; a campaign is conducted to arouse mass support for the bill; masses of workers and farmers rally to its support; hopes run high. (the bill is killed in sub-committee). But let us suppose that, somehow or other, Congress has finally passed the bill. At last! genuine support for the unemployed! At last! real security! Not so fast, my innocent friends: nine old men are waiting in ambush for your bill.... they sit in the Supreme Court. They have already declared a system of insurance for railway workers invalid. Their task is to serve the constitution. Therefore they must serve private property. You, the unemployed, are hungry; to satisfy your hunger you would confiscate property. Those nine old men must defend private property and kill unemployment insurance bills.

What, then, happens to the unemployed? Restricted as they are to the legal and the constitutional, their struggle must continue along that line. Either they will become discouraged and give up the whole struggle, or else they will start a campaign for constitutional reform. The launching of such a campaign is the beginning of the end. The history of our country is full of long protracted campaigns for constitutional amendment. Even today a Child Labor Amendment is in the process of languishing almost completely away after making the rounds of the state legislatures for more than a decade. Long before the unemployed would get their amendment they would either starve to death or rise in revolt against the constitutional government.

Such is the outlook for the unemployed if they continue to seek redress in a parliamentary manner. Not until they start bringing mass pressure to bear; not until they frighten their wealthy masters into making concessions; not until they force the master class into giving security will the unemployed receive any decent consideration.

#### WHAT IS OUR PROGRAM FOR THE UNEMPLOYED?

To begin with, we want to make it clear that we regard the division into categories of employed and unemployed as peculiar to capitalism. Today work is generally determined by two major characteristics: 1) its unpleasantness, and 2) the wage system.

In the light of our ideal of a classless, stateless society, such descriptive characteristics are meaningless. The very concept of wages is incongruous with our generally accepted and wholly possible goal of well-being for all. And we hope that the degree of unpleasantness associated with work today will be considerably lessened, if it cannot disappear completely, when it will be more voluntary and spontaneous in character, and the individual will have so much greater opportunity for choosing his work.

But we are still living under capitalism. And unemployment under capitalism is terrible for those who have no steady income. It always has been. However, so long as it was only a minor and temporary problem for the entire population, it was handled mostly by charities. Therefore the impression that the unemployed received a dole from charity became popular. And



when the government was finally forced to give relief to such a great proportion of the population, reactionaries tried to fight the whole procedure by branding it as a "handout", a dole. They succeeded, at first, in turning the majority of the people against the government support of the unemployed. The stigma was so great that many among the unemployed were ashamed to ask for aid. Thus, for a time, we witnessed a great contradiction in the American scene: an artificially fostered morality that branded government aid as a dole opposed by the unyielding force of absolute necessity compelling the unemployed to apply for relief. For, before all else, the unemployed must live.

The vicious consequences of the hybrid government policies on relief and work relief have already been discussed. And we maintain that no clean-cut, definite, and uncompromising program for the unemployed has yet been introduced in this country. To this task we devote ourselves.

A PROGRAM for the unemployed must include demands for security from the government, and the objective of restoring all the unemployed to industry by winning the shorter work-week; such a program must carefully examine the alternative methods of fighting for its achievement; it must set forth in broad outlines the type of campaign the unemployed must follow. It must set forth the type of organization required to conduct the struggle. In other words, a program for the unemployed must be judged by the unity it creates between the different, although related phases, of the problem of unemployment.

Upon the ability of the unemployed to adopt such a program and create the necessary organization on a national scale, depends their success or failure in the future.

#### A — GOVERNMENT SECURITY

##### 1) We demand the abolition of emergency relief!

Emergency relief bureaus were established on the deliberately fostered illusory hope that the unemployment crisis was temporary. We knew and they knew that it wasn't. Under the present system of relief administered by the 48 states, the unemployed are suffering under 48 different standards. One state can always point to the lower standards of another state in defending its own starvation levels. Relief is handled in a haphazard manner. The unemployed are never sure of aid from one month to the next, the budgets being accepted or rejected every month. However, so long as emergency relief will exist, we shall insist upon and struggle for more adequate standards of relief. Therefore,

##### 2) We demand an ample system of social security!

Compensation for the unemployed, must be equivalent to local prevailing wages, because we insist that those who are out of work through no fault of their own, must not be punished for it with lowered standards of living. The funds for this compensation must not come from the workers, who have never received the full product of their labor, but from the wealthy, who are most capable of bearing the burden and whose wealth was sto-



len from the former labor of all workers, including the current unemployed.

**Under no circumstances, will we take the responsibility for administration of these measures.** We, who never participated in the control of American industry, will not undertake, today, when we have been thrown out of industry, to maintain the "credit structure of American industry." We shall insist upon our demands and shall fight for those demands. And, so long as we live under the capitalist system, we do not care who finally yields to our demands, whether they be conservatives, liberals, or r-r-r-revolutionists. We know that even conservatives have yielded in the past to the militant pressure of the masses. We know that they will yield again. But the pressure that won in the past did not run in parliamentary channels. Either directly, or potentially, the mass pressure that wins concessions from the master class is the pressure that genuinely threatens the very basis of their rule, and puts human needs above legal procedures. This phase of the program will be discussed below.

**3) We demand prevailing wages and shorter hours of work on all work relief projects!**

It is the duty of the unemployed to fiercely resist the attempts of the government to put them to work at wages lower than prevailing standards. Such a government policy saddles the unemployed to a standard of living far below the "minimum health and decency standard" set by its own Bureau of Labor Statistics. It also encourages employers in private industry to lower their wages to the level of the government standard. It destroys at one blow the standards built up so laboriously by the trade unions in the course of their struggles for the last few decades.

The unemployed must also fight for shorter hours. They must demand that the government, as the largest single employer in the country, be the first to lower the work-week without lowering living standards. Government projects must become an example and incentive for all the workers in the struggle for shorter hours.

**B — RE-ABSORPTION BY INDUSTRY**

We know that the necessary condition for the elimination of the hazards of unemployment is a shift in the very basis of our national economy. The motive for production must be changed from the prospects of profits to the requirements of actual needs, or use. But this can only be done by the destruction of private ownership of the means of production. For that we shall require a social revolution.

However, unemployment can be reduced today, under capitalism. We can create more jobs in industry if we can force our masters to pass on to us some of the benefits of improved machinery. If, instead of the boss getting all the benefits of such improvements by firing some and keeping the rest of us working as long as before, we insisted upon sharing those benefits through shorter hours **for all the workers** at the same wage, unemployment would not have reached the proportions it already has reached. If, today, the unemployed took up their struggle for shorter hours in in-



dustry, they would be able to draw the employed workers directly into their struggle and thus present a united front of the whole working class against both government and industry. For, although the employed worker might not be able to join a direct struggle for government aid, he could and undoubtedly would join a movement for shorter hours in which the unemployed were his allies and not potential scabs. Shorter hours and no reduction in pay is a positive slogan for the employed as well as the unemployed, and under it, joint struggle between them can be raised to the highest degree. At the same time, this great army, struggling so intensely on the industrial front, will represent a constant threat to established "law and order" and must eventually force major concessions from both the government and industry.

As a first step in the process of reduction of hours, even though it will not reabsorb all the unemployed, the workers must fight for the 30 hour week. And when that will have been won and proven insufficient, the struggle will have to continue for a still shorter week. For the 30 hour week is not the goal of our struggle. Our slogan is **No More Unemployed! Every Worker On The Job!**

But we must not depend upon a "sympathetic" president or congress. We must depend upon ourselves and our organized might.

**Employed and Unemployed, Unite and Fight!**

C — WHAT TYPE OF CAMPAIGN SHOULD THE UNEMPLOYED EMPLOY?

The situation of the unemployed is unique among the exploited groups. Exploited workers in mines, mills, sweat shops, etc., each have their own particular grievances, which are confined either to certain areas or certain industries. The major obstacle that they must overcome is the ignorance of the general public and their fellow workers as to their working conditions. Very often, one set of workers does not know the conditions of another set of workers in the same industry. The tactics of these workers must be concerned primarily with educating fellow workers as well as outsiders as to conditions within a whole industry. Such tactics we designate as "publicity" seeking tactics, so as to differentiate it from actual "victory" seeking tactics. In the past, workers had to combine the two in their struggles.

But unemployment is a national phenomenon. Its results are uniform throughout the nation. No one is ignorant of its existence. Unemployment is an accepted fact today. Therefore the unemployed and their allies can safely dispense with mere "publicity" seeking tactics and proceed to grapple with "victory" seeking tactics. There is not a problem of making known their existence; there is a problem of organizing their strength so greatly that their masters, through fear, will give them what they want. For we must accept as an established truth that the masters of government and industry will not voluntarily help us.

If, then, we must arouse their fear, how are we to do it? Through Congress? But we have already seen that labor has no major party of its



own, and that it may take many years before it can build such a party. And we must also remember that the guardians of the constitution, which has no provisions for unemployment but many for the defense of privilege and private property, has already declared unconstitutional one workmen's pension act, that of the railway workers. Therefore we can only conclude that our masters have nothing to fear from us if we stick to parliamentary activities (in which we have no representatives) and the constitution (which could never have foreseen a national catastrophe of permanent mass unemployment).

In the light of this we must condemn the efforts of the Communists and Socialists to pass laws for our benefit through Congress.

We must arouse the fear of our masters in the only way that fear can be aroused: by organization and demonstration of our strength. The unemployed must organize themselves into a national union for struggle. That struggle must be directed against the government and against industry. In the latter struggle the direct cooperation of the trade unions must be secured.

#### WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT?

It must not take the form of hunger marches to Washington or the respective state capitals or city halls. Such marches may be spectacular, but they are useless and direct the energies of the unemployed into wrong channels. When the veterans made a bonus march upon Washington in 1932, it served to dramatize their case before the people. But unemployment is known to all and does not need such dramatic publicity. The unemployed are being considered by every section of the population. Each has a program for them. The unemployed and their friends and allies demand better treatment; the master class would like to dump them all into the sea or send them off to the wars. The problem of the unemployed, then, is to force the master class to give them better treatment. All demonstrations, therefore, that lead merely to more propaganda, waste the energies of the unemployed, direct their faith and attention upon fruitless projects, and to that extent betray their true interests. We must condemn the C. P. for devoting its energy to such activities.

Every demonstration must not only voice demands; it must demonstrate the power of the unemployed. It must be a challenge and a warning. The unemployed are hungry? They are without clothes? Remember what the I. W. W. did in 1907 in Detroit. Hungry harvest workers, facing a lean winter, were demanding relief from the city. How did they express their demands? Did they organize one hunger march after the other? Did they go to city hall every other day? No! they presented their demands. The mayor ignored them. So they proceeded to apply only one of the tactics of direct action. They went into the restaurants in groups, ate, and handed the checks to the cashier saying "Charge it to the mayor!"

This tactic was so successful that the city was forced to give these



workers relief for the entire winter. An American city, individualistic to the core, the home of Henry Ford, was actually handing out relief to unemployed workers twenty-five years before the "new deal" government adopted the same tactic for its millions of unemployed.

The police and the military may be able to concentrate upon the city halls, and state and national capitals, but they cannot be concentrated upon all the warehouses and restaurants in the city, the state, or the country. Let the unemployed show a little more respect for their persons and a lot less for private property, and the government and the wealthy will also begin to fear and respect their strength. Let the unemployed show their contempt for the law that forces them to starve, and the government will be helpless before them. For there are not enough jails, and there can never be enough jails, to house the 20,000,000 who are on relief today. The government will then be forced to yield to their demands to save its appearance of maintaining authority. The wealthy will be glad to contribute for support for the sake of keeping the rest of their wealth intact.

The character of the unemployed movement that must arise must be a determined fighting movement. Strikes on relief jobs must not be transformed into fruitless demonstrations before city halls: the strikers remain at the job. We must always bear in mind that the workers' greatest strength is on the economic front. In measure as his strength on this front grows in organization and unity, he is able to exert pressure upon both government and industry.

The struggle of the unemployed against the government must take the form of constant challenge of the right of private property to ignore the needs of the starving masses. These must constitute a continuous challenge to the very existence of private property and the government which defends it while so great a body of its citizens as the unemployed remain neglected by the powers that be.

In the struggle to get back into industry, the unemployed organizations must carry on a continuous campaign among the employed workers, organized and unorganized, to strike for lower hours, at the same or possibly higher pay. They must pledge and give full support to every strike. The unemployed must be on the picket lines of the employed on strike and must demand the right to representation upon strike committees. Only such a course of militant direct action on the economic front on a nationwide scale can bring success to our struggle to get back into industry. We cannot and must not be beguiled into believing that Roosevelt or Congress will do it for us. A New Deal for the workers is the task of the workers themselves!

From the above discussion, it is evident that only an organization dedicated to struggle can ever help the unemployed out of their difficulty. They must be organized on a national scale. Such an organization must be free from the domination of any political party; it must suffer from no parliamentary illusions; it must be built on a federative basis, so that each section is free to meet its own particular local problems; it must be highly



democratic so as to benefit from the experiences of all the members and draw them into more cooperation through such democracy; it must, and undoubtedly will, by virtue of the very nature of the organization, be free of the evils of a privileged bureaucracy.

Such an organization must be tireless in its efforts on behalf of the unemployed. It must continually struggle to prevent the unemployed from following the pipe dreams and nationalist sirens of potential fascist leaders.

Above all, the unemployed must not suffer from any illusions of genuine relief from their heavy burdens under capitalism. They must, from the very beginning, realize that all their struggles for just demands can lead only to partial solutions so long as the control of our economic life remains in the hands of a tiny minority of the people. The unemployed must rid themselves of all hopes for a **complete solution** of their problems under capitalism. Otherwise the bitter realization of the truth of only partial victories after valiant struggle might lead to a great lowering of morale among them. A great hoplessness and cynicism might spread among them and dampen the kindled ardor of an aroused fighting spirit.

So we say to the Forgotten Men of America, the Great Unemployed: **Put forth your just claims! Fight for them! When you see that capitalism can give you no more — THROW IT OVER! Substitute for it a REAL NEW DEAL based on JUSTICE, EQUALITY AND LIBERTY.**

#### **FORGOTTEN MEN OF AMERICA:**

Your rulers have abandoned you!

Your masters have thrown you out of the industries that you created!

Your political parties forget you right after election day!

Your representatives in Congress never knew of your existence!

Your "New Deal" President never knew of your existence! His "forgotten man", was the bank book and the profit-and-loss statement!

Cynically they give you the cold shoulder! Contemptuously they throw you their challenge:

#### **WHAT NOW!**

Closing tight their ranks, the employed and unemployed Forgotten Men of American Democracy hurl back their their answer:

Down with a New Deal for bosses!

No more Emergency Relief!

For Genuine Social Security for the Workers and Farmers, Professionals and Intellectuals of America!

For Union Standards on Work Relief Projects!

For the 30 Hour Week!

No More Unemployment!

Every Worker on the Job!

No more Politics for the Working Class!

Our Rights to Health and Comfort Above those of Private Property!

Only Direct Action Can Help Us!

For a Fighting Organization of the Unemployed!

For the Unity of the Employed and Unemployed!

**At the depth of the depression, at the height of our hopeless degrading poverty, we march shoulder to shoulder, grimly determined, to the STRUGGLE FOR A NEW LIFE!**



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