

# Jobless Convention to Launch Nation-Wide Fight for the Workers Social Insurance Bill

## Fraudulent Bills Aim to Sidetrack Real Benefits

By I. AMTER

The demand for proper government protection against unemployment is growing rapidly among the masses of workers. All the measures thus far adopted by the government, both federal, state, county and city, have not improved the situation of the workers. The number of unemployed is growing, with an increase of nearly 4 per cent in the past two months. The industries report no rise in production. The steel industry, which put forward high expectation of January being a "banner month" admits that there are no orders.

The government announced a public works program last June, but this has been devoted almost exclusively to war preparations and subsidies to the railroads and big corporations. No more than 100,000 men are at work on federal public works. As a bridge to public works, the government, forced by the pressure of the masses of unemployed, instituted the C. W. A. program. Although there has been much propaganda about the federal government putting more than 4,000,000 to work on these jobs, this is untrue, and the great part of these workers were merely transferred from county and city jobs. But the main gain to the unemployed is that they have forced the federal government to provide work at CASH wages. To be sure these wages have been very low, far below the union scale. Union wages were granted to a small number of skilled workers, as a help to the A. F. of L. bureaucrats to get back into the ranks the men whom they expelled for unemployment.

### Abandon C. W. A.; Enlarge C. C. C. as War Preparation

Now, more than 200,000 of the C. W. A. men have been ordered fired at once, as part of Roosevelt's plan of helping the "forgotten man." The C. W. A. program is to be scotched by May 1, with the hope expressed that at least 2,000,000 will find "normal work"—how, Roosevelt does not say. The remainder—Roosevelt does not worry about.

Three hundred thousand boys are in the C. C. C. camps—and their number is to be increased to 1,000,000 by summer. These camps, according to Assistant Secretary of War Woodring, are nothing but military camps in preparation for war. The millions of transients are to be forced into civilian labor camps without pay—also under the control of the War Department.

"The relief situation is worse than it was a year ago," declared Bishop Manning in New York City the other day. Relief is being cut down, Roosevelt advocates cutting it off entirely. His remedy is to put the unemployed into homestead colonies where they will work in new industries and cultivate gardens. This at a time of overproduction of industrial products and such a "surplus" of agricultural produce that he orders the destruction of food! This is Roosevelt's "planned economy!"

Thus the whole relief situation is endangered. Millions of workers face stark hunger. No work—no relief—the refusal of the government to provide unemployment insurance.

### Workers Demand Unemployment Insurance

The movement for unemployment and social insurance is growing in all sections of the working population. The workers realized that the irregular payments of inadequate relief cannot go on any longer. They have witnessed wholesale discrimination, graft and corruption in relief. This is nothing compared to the graft, kick-back and racketeering that are occurring in connection with the C. W. A. jobs. Even the federal government has to admit that in the federal administration itself hundreds of thousands of dollars have been misused.

Discrimination against the Negro workers in relief and on the C. W. A. jobs has been practiced. Discrimination against foreign-born, single and young workers, who practically received no relief whatever, except where they put up a stubborn fight. Indifference to the plight of the millions of women workers. Indifference to the ten million children who are starving in this country.

The government knows that the movement for unemployment and social insurance is developing in this country! Hence like last year it is bringing forward proposals to offset the movement for the Workers Unemployment and Social Insurance Bill, the only genuine bill before the workers of this country.

## Insurance Bill

(by the U. S. Congress)

ough unemployment insurance committees of workers' organizations. Missions is empowered to establish the registration of the workers, the hearing of contested claims appeals from awards made; and be

be paid to workers to the amount of workers, \$3.00 for each dependent, through sickness, accident, old age,

shall receive the difference between insurance benefit. No worker shall employment insurance because he re-he was formerly receiving or below that vicinity, nor shall he or she because of strike or unsafe or untr-ers are longer than the usual trade de or locality; and be it further not be required to accept employment is offered is at an un-home.

## I. Amter



National Secretary, Unemployed Councils

The Workers Bill is perfectly clear. It provides that each and every worker without discrimination shall for the full period of idleness caused by no fault of his or her own, whether for unemployment, part-time, sickness, accident, old age or maternity, receive insurance equal to the full average wage of the respective industry in the locality, but at no time shall it be less than \$10 a week plus \$3 for each dependent. No worker shall be obliged to accept work for which he is not fit, or where a strike is in progress; nor shall he be compelled to take work which is a long distance from his home. The funds shall be raised exclusively through progressive taxation on all incomes above \$5,000, through the use of all war funds, through a capital levy on the wealth of the multi-millionaires and billionaires. The fund shall be controlled and administered by a commission elected by workers' organizations.

This bill is simple, clear and concise. Let us explain a bit. The amount of insurance shall be such that the unemployed may not be used to lower the condition of the workers in the shops. Therefore, the proposal of the "average wage in the respective industry and locality." On the other hand, it shall not be allowed to descend to an amount that would mean starvation—as some of the codes of the N. I. R. A. do (laundry). Therefore the minimum of \$10 a week plus \$3 for each dependent.

### For Whole Period of Unemployment

Insurance shall continue for the whole period of unemployment. Unemployment will remain as long as capitalism exists. "Five to ten million will never return to work," said Roosevelt. Millions work part-time, earning hardly enough to keep body and soul together. Workmen's compensation laws contain provisions that make it difficult to secure relief. Old age pensions exist in few states and provide hunger subsistence for the veterans of labor. Provision for maternity does not exist whatever.

The demands that the funds be raised exclusively by the employers and the government is based on the fact that the workers are not responsible for unemployment. They want to work, but are denied the right. The capitalists, who have enriched themselves through the exploitation of the labor power of the millions, and the government, which is supposed to consider the welfare of the whole population, shall provide means whereby the masses may live. The proposal that all incomes above \$5,000, all war funds and a tax levy on the wealthy shall be used for this purpose is based on placing the responsibility where it belongs and from which adequate funds may be obtained without any "hardship" on its bearers.

### Wins Wide Endorsement

The Workers Unemployment and Social Insurance Bill has been endorsed by millions of workers and thousands of working class organizations. It has the support of more than 1,400 locals of the A. F. of L., three state federations of labor, numerous central labor bodies, independent and T. U. U. L. unions four municipal councils, the masses of workers supporting the Unemployed Councils, the Fraternal Federation for Social Insurance, professional groups, etc.

To offset this wide sweep of the Workers Bill, various fake unemployment bills have been introduced in the U. S. congress and state legislatures. In 1933, 29 bills were introduced in the state legislatures. A bill was enacted in Wisconsin, then shelved. Another was introduced in Ohio—a "model" bill—but was not adopted. In New York as a result of the findings of a commission appointed by Roosevelt when he was governor, a bill was introduced, but even this miserable concoction failed of adoption.

### All Others Inadequate

A bill has been introduced in the U. S. congress by Representative Cannon of Wisconsin. Senator Wagner also has a bill. The state bills vary. In general the following are the provisions of all these bills. They exclude the present 17,000,000 unemployed, as well as the agricultural, migratory, domestic, public and civil service workers and aliens (with some exceptions regarding the latter). They provide, as in the Cannon bill, that a worker must have been completely unemployed and unable to find work. Most of them do not provide that the workers shall not be compelled to scab, but shall accept work within his capabilities. They provide a maximum period of unemployment benefit of 18 weeks (down to 10 weeks in some states), and a minimum insurance benefit of \$10 (increased to about \$15 in others), and then the unemployed worker has no further claim on the insurance fund until he can again prove that he has been working 6 months during the previous year.

Funds for insurance are to be derived from contributions from the workers, the employers, and in some instances from the state. In some bills, provision is made that the corporations are exempt from federal taxation for the amount that they pay

## Demand All War Funds Go to Jobless; Tax On the Rich

into the unemployment benefit pools (Wagner bill). In the Wisconsin bill, if the employers set up their own insurance schemes, they are freed from state control. If they should go bankrupt or liquidate their business, the worker would be in bad luck. In the other bills the funds are controlled and administered either by the State directly or by a commission set up by the state. These bills are nothing but unemployment reserves bills. Cannon's bill if adopted would not go into operation until 1935.

The "liberals" have their own bill. This bill sponsored by the American Association for Social Security is another "model" state bill and provides that the worker shall receive only 40 per cent of his average wage, but at no time more than \$10 a week, for no longer than 26 weeks in a year. This bill, like all the other bills, provides for no insurance in case a worker is discharged for "misconduct," which means for agitating or for organizing a union; for refusing to break strikes; for going on strike. All the bills in this respect, therefore, are strikebreaking bills.

### Swope Plan a Swindle

Then there is the Swope plan, which was applied in the General Electric plants. According to this plan, the workers and employers pay into a fund, through which the worker is supposed to be guaranteed \$15 a week for the full time of unemployment or part-time. This plan did not meet its promises however, for with the discharge of tens of thousands of workers in 1930-1, the company soon cut the amount of insurance to as low as \$2 a week and finally discontinued it. Some of the workers had paid into the fund for years, and thus were duped.

### A. F. of L., S. P. Split Workers Forces

Governor Lehman of New York now proposes a bill of similar character, except that it will be financed only by the individual employers, without the state participating. This puts the workers completely at the mercy of their employers, and represents a strike breaking wage-cutting instrument of tremendous power. Governor Lehman is "studying" the bill with leaders of the State Federation of Labor and doubtless will get their approval.

The Socialist party, which had its own own bill, has forsaken it and gives support to the bills introduced in the state legislatures by the Republicans and Democrats. The A. F. of L. leaders oppose federal unemployment insurance on the ground that a federal bill would be declared "unconstitutional" by the United States supreme court! The purpose of their stand is to split the forces of the workers in the 48 states and make the fight 48 times as hard. The Unemployed Councils are carrying on the campaign for the enactment of the Workers Bill by the federal government, pending which they direct the struggle also against the state governments.

There will be a flood of bills in the various state and federal legislative bodies this year. These bills are along the lines of the Roosevelt "new deal" and in keeping with his promise of "unemployment insurance." They mean to bring about no change in the

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## Workers to Demand Jobless Insurance at Feb. 5th Meets

NEW YORK.—February 5 will be a day of gigantic demonstrations throughout the country. On that day, when the workers' delegates present the demands of the jobless to the Roosevelt government, workers in every city in the country will demonstrate for the passage of the Workers' Unemployment Insurance Bill. On that day, the workers of every city will demand immediate adequate relief for the unemployed. Those who have been denied relief, and the millions who have registered and been denied C.W.A. jobs will demand that the city governments endorse the Workers Unemployment Insurance Bill.

The Negro workers, the foreign-born, single and young workers have every reason to demonstrate. It is our job to get them out on the streets in unity with the rest of the workers in struggle for continuation of the C.W.A. jobs, for jobs without discrimination for all workers, or adequate cash relief, for the Workers Unemployment and Social Insurance Bill.

This cannot be done spontaneously. Therefore the National Committee of Unemployed Councils calls on all affiliated bodies immediately to organize and lead the struggles on the C.W.A. jobs, where stoppages of work, strikes, marches, are occurring every day. Organize the workers who have registered for C.W.A. jobs and have been kept waiting. Organize and lead in struggle the millions who are getting no relief.

Roosevelt says the C.W.A. jobs must end on May 1. It is not up to Roosevelt to decide it. It is our job to let Roosevelt and the government know that the workers refuse to starve. Plenty of money for war purposes—from the same source shall come funds for the unemployed.

All local, county councils must get on the job at once. Issue leaflets, raise the local issues, call meetings, mobilize the workers for immediate struggle. Then Feb. 5 will be a high day in the struggles of the workers for their needs, and particularly for unemployment and social insurance.

# Jobless Convention To Open Fight for Social Insurance Bill

(Continued from Page Four)

situation of the army of unemployed; they aim to tie the worker to his job and make him accept any conditions that the employer forces upon him; they are for strikebreaking purposes; they do not solve the problem of seasonal work (which is common in all industries); they make no provision for part time, sickness, accident, old age or maternity. They are being proposed to the workers as "something just as good."

The fight for the Workers Unemployment and Social Insurance Bill, which has been quite weak, must now assume a nationwide character. The National Convention Against Unemployment in Washington on Feb. 3 will launch an energetic campaign among the unemployed, in the shops, unions, fraternal organizations, clubs, etc. There must be an intense discussion in all working class organizations on the Workers Bill as compared with all other bills, and this be the beginning of the biggest struggle that this country has ever seen. The situation demands it—the workers want it. The need of unemployment and social insurance has become clear.

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NOTE: — The pamphlet "Why the Workers Unemployment and Social Insurance Bill and How It Can Be Won" by I. Amter, National Secretary of the Unemployed Councils, may be obtained from the National Unemployed Councils, 80 E. 11th St., Room 437, N. Y. City. The pamphlet goes into detail on the question, analyzing the Workers Bill and all other insurance schemes.