

# Force the Enactment of the Workers' Bill!

By I. AMTER

THE demand for the enactment of social insurance legislation is growing with tremendous rapidity. This can be seen (1) in the big spurt in the number of endorsements of the Workers' Unemployment and Social Insurance Bill, and the importance of the organizations supporting it; (2) the militant opposition to it by the officials of the A. F. of L. and their slanderous circulars and statements against it; (3) the pretense of new "studies" on the question promulgated by the Roosevelt government; and (4) the vicious attack on any and all kinds of unemployment or social insurance by leading industrialists and capitalist institutions.

The continuation of the crisis, without any prospect of alleviation, is the basis of the growing demand for partial security through social insurance. It must be noted that there was a brief, but energetic, swing upward between March, 1933, and July, 1933, immediately after the inauguration of Roosevelt. This was followed by a sharp slump, since there was no basis for such increased production except the capitalists' fear of an increased cost of production in the form of wages and the taking advantage of lower wages to stock up. From July to October, 1933, the slump continued, so that the government had to make more "orderly" provision for the 16,000,000 unemployed. This it did through the C.W.A. program, which lasted only four months, but which enabled the government to put \$400,000,000 in circulation and thus create more "confidence". During the spring months of this year there was some gain in production, partly in prospect of strike movements in the auto, steel, and other industries. When these particular movements did not materialize owing to the treacherous policies of the A. F. of L. leaders, and the industries were stocked up, production crashed. Thus, within a few weeks steel production dropped from 75 to 22 per cent of capacity. At the present moment, the situation is one of lower production than in August, 1933, and the prospect of an autumn rise is quite remote. The promise is now held out for *next spring*.

The situation has been accentuated by the farming situation. The government did not even pretend that the income of the farm-

ers, in spite of all "protective" legislation by the government—plow-under, bonus on processing, etc., would net the farmers a greatly increased income. It was assumed that \$500,000,000 might be added to their income, but this has been completely wiped out by the drought, which, as even the government admits, will cost the farmers at least five billion dollars. This will mean a tremendous increase in the cost of living for the workers. The farmers' plight is most serious, with a drop in income from 19 billions in 1919 to less than 4 billions in 1933. Out of each dollar spent by the consumer for farm products, the farmer received only 36 cents in January, 1934.

#### WORKERS STRUGGLE AGAINST N.R.A.

The mood of the working class has been expressed in the gigantic strike struggles that have taken place in the last 17 months. If last year the strikes were for higher wages and in part directly against the National Industrial Recovery Act, this year the workers are actuated even more by the same motives. Although the wage scales were raised for the unskilled workers, they were not increased for the skilled. Hours were cut, so that if a somewhat larger number of workers are now at work than a year ago, and the payroll is higher, the weekly wages in many cases are lower. In view of the sharply increased cost of living—*21½ per cent in thirteen months*—and the present soaring prices, which will rise precipitously in the coming months as a result of the drought, the unrest among the factory workers is developing very rapidly.

This has been intensified by the speed-up. Thus, Leonard P. Ayres, well-known economist and banker of Cleveland, reports that from 1924 to 1929, per capita production rose 15 points, while per capita earnings gained only about 5 points. He further states that during the period of March to July, 1933, production per worker *"staged another astonishingly great advance"*, without, as Mr. Ayres adds, *the workers receiving higher wages*. There has been a sharp recession in production, but at the same time the introduction of new machinery and the application of speed-up continue in all industries. This means the permanent elimination of tens of thousands of more workers from these industries, to be thrown among the millions who have been dislodged by structural unemployment.

#### IS UNEMPLOYMENT DECLINING?

How many unemployed are there in the country? A lively discussion is now taking place among the government, the A. F. of L. executives, and various capitalist institutions. For some time, the figures of unemployment published by the A. F. of L. were ac-

cepted as practically official by the U.S. Department of Labor. A few months ago, the government decided no longer to use the year 1926 as the basis of computation, but the period of 1923-25. The purpose of this was clear. The level of employment in those three years was lower than in 1926. Hence the degree of unemployment in the present crisis would not be so "abnormal" if compared with 1923-25 as with 1926.

The A. F. of L. declared that in July there were 10,300,000 unemployed, this number being higher than that of last October. The United States Chamber of Commerce declares that "reliable data" indicate that today there are less than 7,000,000 unemployed. In fact, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce comes to the conclusion that this number is only 5,000,000 above the normal number of unemployed, which includes 2,000,000 "unemployables".

There are *no statistics* on unemployment; they are based purely on "estimates", without regard to special conditions. Thus, the A. F. of L. has no connection with agricultural or domestic workers. At any particular juncture when reports are issued, the A. F. of L. officials base their figures on reports from the international unions. This is a faulty method, as above indicated. In addition, the A. F. of L. considers the unemployed working on relief jobs as "employed" workers. It does not include in its calculations the 7,000,000 unemployed youth reported by U.S. Commissioner of Education, Dr. Zook—boys and girls between 14 and 20 who have not obtained work in industry.

There are fully 15,000,000 unemployed in the country and the number is now rapidly rising. The precipitate drop of production to the extent of 20 per cent in the month of July indicates the trend. The applications for relief are another indication. Thus, in New York City 77,000 were added to the relief list in June, while in August the daily increase was 1,537. Mayor LaGuardia admitted on August 15, that there has been no decrease in unemployment during his administration, which began last January.

Whom do the unemployed represent? According to Senator Borah, they represent

"... close to 40,000,000 people in the United States either depending on charity or living close to the want line." (*N. Y. Times*, Aug. 10, 1934.)

Borah's estimate is too low—the number is closer to 60,000,000.

Frances Perkins, following up the report of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, in a misleading statement on Aug. 14, tried to imply that the number of unemployed is about 7,065,000. She reports that 6,951,000 have been assisted in obtaining jobs since July, 1933, and that only 7,000,000 remain unplaced. But Miss Perkins in-

cludes among these 6,951,000 the men who were placed on the long defunct C.W.A. jobs, and who today are either on relief rolls or entirely destitute.

The Department of Commerce, on the other hand, reports that the business index dropped 11 per cent below a year ago. Standard Statistics Co. calculates the drop as much as 20 per cent below 1933.

#### GOVERNMENT METHODS AND STANDARDS OF RELIEF

The government methods of providing relief or work for the millions of unemployed are totally inadequate. Nearly two million unemployed are working on projects—city and county. Their wages fluctuate between 25 and 50 cents an hour; in some cases they receive 24 hours of work a week, in others the number is still less. In some States all workers have to work for relief, the bonus being 10 cents an hour. In others, those working on city jobs get the amount allotted for home relief, while those working on federal projects receive \$12 a week.

In establishing the C.C.C. camps, the government indicated what standard it considered proper for the American workers. *One dollar a day*. And although this may seem unconvincing to the average worker and was called "Communist propaganda", we have but to examine the wages of workers on federal projects, under the Public Works Administration, to ascertain what wage the government considers proper. In the month of May the average pay of 370,000 workers on federal projects building public roads, public buildings, naval vessels, etc., was \$48.65 a month (*Monthly Labor Review* of the U.S. Department of Labor.)

The relief standard in the "best" cities and towns is close to the hunger line. In New York, the standard for a family is about \$40 per month—a sum which must cover food, rent, light, heat, clothing, and medical attention. The amount drops to such inconceivable levels as \$1 for two weeks for a family of seven in Covington, Ky. The relief situation is becoming progressively worse. The cities and States refuse to tax the rich, and the Federal government refuses to advance funds for relief. The whole relief system is breaking down. The government and the capitalists placed hopes in the N.I.R.A., which is not fulfilling its "aims" as far as rehabilitating industry is concerned, but has only extended the effects of the crisis on a somewhat higher level.

#### GROWING MISERY OF THE MASSES

How inadequate the relief is may be gathered from two sources. In New York, Teachers College of Columbia University calculates that a family of five requires \$9.45 per week for a "wholesome and

adequate" diet. In Michigan, according to the Dept. of Labor and Industry, a similar family requires between \$25.65 and \$33.20 per month. Nowhere is this standard for food alone even approached. A consequence is the steady elimination of actual necessities of life. Thus, Grace Abbott, chief of the U.S. Children's Bureau, states that in a survey of railroad engineers "91 per cent of the families had cut milk purchases more than 50 per cent and 27 per cent of them had reduced milk purchases 100 per cent." (*Philadelphia Record*, June 10.)

This has been due in part to unemployment, low relief, part-time work, and the constantly rising cost of living. Thus in four years, *retail sales fell 47.4 per cent*—from \$49,114,000,000 in 1929, to \$25,700,000,000 in 1933. True, there was an increase of sales in 1934, but a leading official of a food concern, Krasne, characterizes the situation as follows:

"Thanks to President Roosevelt and his temporary expedients, we have experienced the *best year* in our eighteen years of business. When I say the best year, I mean from the standpoint of profit. The volume has not been as heavy as in previous years. *This situation of smaller volume and larger profits is excellent from our own standpoint*, but I am impelled to consider the effect of advanced prices on the public." (*N. Y. Post*, July 14, 1934.)

The effect is clear from the acts of desperation, increase of crime and prostitution, insanity, starvation, decreased vitality of the population, lowering of births, etc. Five years of crisis, with the level of existence of those who had always been in want reduced even below that low level, but the standard of millions more lowered to a level at which they could never have conceived they would have to live—this is the record. According to Dr. Carmen Haider of New York:

"In terms of actual nourishment the workers are worse off than they were a year ago. . . . In fact, according to a survey of grocery store expenditures, the total amount of foodstuffs consumed for the month of April, 1934, was actually less than that bought in April of last year, the bottom of the depression." (*N. Y. Times*, July 12.)

#### PRESENT GOVERNMENT PROGRAM

In order to meet the growing discontent, with methods reminiscent of Hitler, who also is "reducing" unemployment, the Roosevelt government has devised the following forms of work:

1. *C.C.C. camps*, in which more than 650,000 unemployed youth already have received military training, and some 30,000 veterans have been given work. The idea is now being considered of having *all* youth serve an apprenticeship in such camps, for a two-

fold purpose: first, of keeping them off the labor market, thus leaving more jobs available for adults; and secondly, in order more thoroughly to inoculate the youth with patriotic propaganda and give them military training at the expense of relief funds, rather than of the military budget.

2. *Transient camps*, of which there are more than two hundred, scattered throughout the country and in which the hundreds of thousands of transient single men receive food, shelter, and 90 cents a week. In these camps, which are under similar military direction, the workers are compelled to do work for which union wages should be paid—such as road-building, paving, etc., thus depriving “normal” labor of an opportunity to earning a living.

3. *Camps for women*. Here young women are not given productive work but are trained to be efficient housemaids, etc., and upon leaving the camps are eligible to domestic jobs the pay of which is as low as \$5-\$10 a month.

4. *Subsistence homesteads* of which there are already nearly 50 and to which hundreds of thousands of unemployed will be transported as part of the decentralization plan of the government. This plan has long been sponsored by Henry Ford as part of his scheme of making it difficult to organize the hundreds of thousands of auto workers normally employed in the industry. With the simplification of production, it will be very easy to take the three hundred thousand coal miners who have been permanently dislodged from the industry, and hundreds of thousands of railroad, building trades and other workers, place them in small factories to be established on the homestead, pay them relief rates for their work and thus lower the standard of living of the American workers. This is part of the program enunciated during the Hoover administration when the clamor of the capitalists rose high in the demand that American labor come down to the standard of European labor. Thus, the capitalists said, American industry would be able to compete with European industry.

The workers on the homesteads will raise their own food and out of their earnings pay off the price of the homestead, interest, etc. This plan a la Hitler will relieve the government of responsibility for providing relief and will at the same time help to lower the standard of living of the whole American working class.

In addition, the drive against the foreign born, the elimination of non-citizens from work in public institutions, the denial of suffrage to those in relief camps (according to the declaration of Harry Hopkins, federal relief director), the demand by prominent capitalists that all relief recipients be denied the vote (which is already part of the pauper's oath that in various parts of the country the

authorities are trying to impose upon the unemployed before giving them relief), the continued vicious discrimination against the Negroes, show the whole tendency of the government. This is also part of the ballyhoo campaign to demonstrate that "unemployment is decreasing".

#### FEDERAL CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM A FARCE

The government also has an alleged plan of public construction. Through the Federal Housing Administration and the Home Owners Loan Corporation, the government proposes to make loans to home owners so as to enable them to renovate their homes and also to erect the millions of homes that are needed in this country. Just like the loans to the farmers through the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, these loans are based upon many conditions that the home owners with a small equity cannot meet. Thus the whole program becomes a joke. Nevertheless, it is held forth as a great bait to win the two million building trades workers in this country. The Third Convention of the National Unemployment Council disclosed in a resolution that 67 *billion dollars'* worth of construction is needed in this country only in the form of homes, hospitals, libraries, schools, etc.—not of battleships and airplanes, which the so-called \$3,300,000,000 "public works fund" of the United States government calls for.

According to the *Philadelphia Record* of May 3, 1934, it has been ascertained through the city planning commission that

*"Over 14 per cent of the city's population lives in a slum section. A great many of the people who live in these blocks are vocationally engaged in the building industry, and are now living on relief. These houses are altogether unfit for human occupation."*

This is typical of the situation as it now exists.

To sum up what the government may be driving towards we quote from an article in *Liberty* magazine of August 11, by the fascist Bernarr MacFadden, who says:

"There should be no such thing as unemployment. Every one should be insured a job not necessarily for the wages he might previously have earned, for that is usually impossible, but there should be work of some kind for every one who desires to earn enough to pay for the actual necessities of life.

"And if there is work of some kind for every victim of unemployment, idleness could be penalized. Those who refused to work could be denied food—that would soon make workers of everybody. Every community should have some public improvement, or, if noth-

ing better, *a rock pile*, or labor of some kind for every unemployment victim." (Emphasis Mine—I. A.)

MacFadden does not propose that the government shall furnish *productive* work for the employment of the millions of unemployed. He is concerned only about the "unnecessary" expenditures for relief. The unemployed have not asked for charity. They have been clamoring for work—not work on a rock pile, or shoveling leaves, but work that will be of benefit not only to themselves but to society. The country is in dire need of construction. The government pretended that the \$3,300,000,000 public works fund was only the first stage in its building construction program. MacFadden intimates further that the unemployed do not wish to work. His use of the words "rock pile" indicates clearly that he puts them into the category of criminals. The unemployed demand work, but knowing full well that capitalism has reached a stage at which work cannot be provided for the whole working class, but that, on the contrary, five to ten million will not be reemployed in industry, the workers are demanding not rock piles but unemployment insurance.

Rock piles may be the climax in the program of the most reactionary section of the capitalists, but it is also basic to Roosevelt's program, even though he shrouds it with much demagoguery.

#### CAPITALIST PROFITS RISE

While "predicting" and "forecasting" a rise in production during the coming months, the capitalists cannot conceal that during the very months in which the conditions of the workers have been steadily growing worse, their profits and dividends have not suffered in this, the beginning of the sixth year of the crisis. Thus in the second quarter of 1934 224 corporations announced a gain of more than 37 per cent in net income over the same period of last year—from \$156,678,000 to \$214,676,000. Standard Oil of New Jersey reports a net profit approximately of \$3,500,000 per month, this having begun in the middle of 1933. 639 corporations report increased dividends of \$132,909,000 in July as compared with \$127,985,000 in the same month of last year, these dividends including 27 extra dividends. The Colgate Company increased its dividends in six months from \$765,000 to \$2,416,000, or 215 per cent over last year; the E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Co. from \$11,277,000 to \$23,553,000 in the same period; General Motors from \$48,068,000 to \$69,586,000; the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. from \$560,000 to \$2,617,000, an increase of nearly 500 *per cent*.

The crisis obviously has not affected the largest capitalist concerns in this country, while it has plunged the workers and toiling



farmers into the deepest misery, with the outlook of greater degradation for the whole toiling population. The maneuvers of the government, aided by the leadership of the A. F. of L., the effort to show its concern by again "studying" unemployment insurance; its proposals to remodel the National Recovery Administration, to leave the "regulation" of industry to industry itself, demonstrate the real aim and purpose of the National Industrial Recovery Act. Its aim was *not* to aid the working class, not to extend the rights of the working masses, but, as stated by the Communist Party, to concentrate power in the hands of the most powerful, reactionary groups of Wall Street; to lower the conditions of the working class by spreading hunger, by instituting mass terror, by helping in the organization of fascist organizations, such as the vigilantes, crusaders, silver, brown and other shirts, and by smashing all militant working class organizations. This is part of the fascism and war program of the U. S. government.

No wonder, therefore, that Hitler and Mussolini congratulated Roosevelt on his program, and that more recently the *Deutsche Bergwerkzeitung* of Germany pronounced Roosevelt a "disciple of Hitler". In his demagoguery and in the plans of the government for suppressing the working class, Roosevelt is following the methods of fascism. This is being accentuated by the sharpening of the crisis, from which there is no prospect of emergence except through war, which marches upon us with seven-league boots.

#### INDUSTRIAL OUTLOOK DARKER

To quote from well-known capitalist authorities, Colonel Leonard P. Ayres, the well-known economist, says:

"The volume of industrial output has fallen by distinctly more than the normal seasonal percentage. *Unemployment is growing and the burden of public relief payments is increasing in even greater degree.* There has been rather serious decline in the security market. *Building construction, except for public projects, is at a lower level.*

"Business sentiment is clearly beset by doubt, and its policies are being guided by self-protective caution. Business has become thoroughly conservative. . . . *The third quarter of 1934 has definitely become a period of general business recession.*" (N. Y. *American*, August 13.)

Or further:

"*Business levels now are down approximately where they were in 1931 (the middle year of the Hoover administration) having slumped this summer below the average of one year ago.*" (N. Y. *World-Telegram*, August 3.)

The codes have not aided employment. Thus,

"Shorter hours have *decreased employment* in the cotton garment industry, rather than having the desired effect of the recovery program, it was brought out in a resolution at the Southern Garment Manufacturers Association convention (in Atlanta, Ga.). The percentage of employment was *13½ per cent more in July, 1933 than in March, 1934*, clearly setting up the fact that shorter hours have *not* increased employment but decreased employment." (*Daily Record*, June 15, 1934.)

Finally, Dr. Willard Thorp, until recently director of the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, of the U.S. Department of Commerce, stated on June 8, 1934 (Columbus, Ohio, *Citizen*):

"It must be frankly recognized that the ultimate goal of balanced economic relationship is still in the future. . . . Experience has shown *competition and the price system to be insufficient to preserve the balance*. . . . The unemployment problem, which gives evidence of becoming chronic, price disparities and the dullness of the capital goods or heavy industries, are *major unsolved problems*."

#### ROOSEVELT DEMAGOGY NO HELP TO MASSES

Thus it is demonstrated from the facts of the development of the crisis, from the statements of capitalist economists, from reports of government institutions, that the N.I.R.A. has failed to meet the promises of the Roosevelt government, to "increase the buying power of the masses, to return the unemployed to the factories, to ease the burdens of the farmers".

On October 31, 1932, during the election campaign, Roosevelt declared with all solemnity:

"As to immediate relief, the first principle is that this nation owes a positive duty that *no one shall be permitted to starve*." (Emphasis mine—I.A.)

That it may not be thought that this was only an election maneuver to win votes from the Republican Party, let us quote his radio speech on June 28, 1934:

"The primary concern of any government dominated by the humane ideals of democracy is the simple principle that in a land of vast resources *no one should be permitted to starve*." (Emphasis mine—I.A.)

If this corresponded with fact, we might consider that Roosevelt was keeping his election promises. How far this is from the

truth is sharply brought forth in a United Press wire from Philadelphia in the *World-Telegram* of August 16, 1934:

*"Hundreds of hunger-crazed squatters on a city dump braved blazing gasoline and a United States marshal's pistol to fish 1,000 gallon cans of poisoned prunes from a flaming pyre.*

*"Who cares? It's something to eat," one man shouted in reply to the warning that the food was tainted.*

*"Ignoring the pistol and the blazing gasoline poured over the pile of cans, they tried to fish the fruit from the flames with long poles. Some succeeded. Violent gastric disorders were predicted for them."*

*These are the facts*, not Roosevelt's rosy pictures of "recovery", demagogic allusions to the pre-Rooseveltian era, "pledges" for the "future". *Growing hunger on a mass scale* promises to affect 60,-000,000 or more persons this winter!

In face of this situation, Roosevelt once more produces the magic charm out of his bag—the "promise" of unemployment insurance. This is done for the purpose of keeping the masses from struggling against the N.I.R.A., from demanding jobs or adequate relief; and primarily to prevent struggle for the only form of social security under the present system, through the Workers' Unemployment and Social Insurance Bill.

#### MORE "PROMISES" OF SOCIAL INSURANCE

That all is not well in the mind of Roosevelt and the Wall Street bankers is clear from the message of Roosevelt to Congress on June 8. In his message, Roosevelt said:

*"Among our objectives I place the security of men, women and children of the nation first. This security for the individual and for the family concerns itself primarily with three factors. People want decent homes to live in; they want to locate them where they can engage in productive work; and they want some safeguard against misfortunes which cannot be wholly eliminated in this man-made world of ours."*

After declaiming about what the 73rd Congress accomplished toward this end, Roosevelt continues:

*"If, as our Constitution tells us, our Federal government was established, among other things, 'to promote the general welfare', it is our plain duty to provide for the security upon which welfare depends. Next winter [after more than two years of promise!—I.A.] we may well undertake the great task of furthering the security of the citizen [!] and his family through social insurance."*

On June 28, speaking over the radio, after asking the people of the country whether they were not "better off than a year ago",

and after emphasizing once more the duty of government, Roosevelt declared that,

"... the third principle is to use the agencies of government to assist in the establishment of means to provide sound and adequate protection against the vicissitudes of modern life—in other words, social insurance."

This is a repetition of his "promise" during the 1932 election campaign.

What is the nature of the social insurance that Roosevelt has in mind? On June 8, 1934, he said:

"I believe there should be a maximum of cooperation between the state and the Federal government. I believe that the funds necessary to provide this insurance should be raised by *contribution rather than by an increase in general taxation*. Above all, I am convinced that social insurance should be national in scope, although the several states should meet at least a large portion of the cost of management, leaving to the Federal government the responsibility of investing, maintaining and safeguarding the funds constituting the necessary insurance reserves. I have commenced to make, with the greatest of care, the necessary actuarial and other studies necessary for the formulation of plans for the consideration of the 74th Congress."

Speaking at the national conference of Catholic Charities, some time before Roosevelt's message, Frances Perkins laid the general plan for this insurance scheme. She proposed a "compulsory" system of insurance, which was to be put upon a "*sound actuarial*" basis and "*strictly limiting all benefits*". Premiums would be paid by

"... *contributions wholly by the employer, or by the employer and employee jointly, or by government participation where states desired it, but the cost should be assessed as one of the industrial hazards for which industry itself must provide.*"

These funds should be,

"... looked to to provide for supplemental compensation to be paid to *workers out of jobs through no fault of their own in the future.*"

#### ROOSEVELT SUPPORTS WAGNER-LEWIS BILL

On March 23, Roosevelt's letter to the House Ways and Means Committee gave endorsement of the Wagner-Lewis Bill for "unemployment insurance". Thus, what Roosevelt had in mind were the provisions of this Bill. This Bill does not provide insurance for the present army of unemployed and various categories of workers, such

as agricultural, domestic, transport workers, nurses, civil service employees, teachers, etc. It provides benefits of \$7 a week for 10 weeks and is put on the "sound actuarial basis" of requiring 5 per cent of the employers' payrolls, which sum may be deducted from income taxes paid by the employer. This is *not* unemployment insurance, but a subterfuge for insurance, and furnishes in addition nothing for such eventualities as sickness, accident, old age or maternity. From Roosevelt we learn also that *only citizens* will be provided with insurance, this being a direct attack on the 6,000,000 non-citizens in this country.

Thus, although Roosevelt is "studying" the question, has set up a "social security commission" with Frances Perkins as its chairman, and has dispatched Harry Hopkins to Europe to "study" the European systems of insurance, but of course not that of the Soviet Union, in order to put the American system on a "sound actuarial" foundation, the great "promise" remains the Wagner-Lewis plan, possibly with some modifications of no value to the millions of unemployed and part-time workers.

The State of Wisconsin has already established an insurance scheme, which in some respects is even worse than the Wagner-Lewis Bill, although in general it conforms to the lines accepted by Roosevelt. More than 125 bills were introduced during the past year in the State legislatures, which indicates the demagoguery with which the whole problem is being approached, and above all the growing demand among the masses for unemployment insurance.

#### GROWING DEMAND FOR WORKERS' BILL

This is to be noted in the widening campaign for the Workers' Bill, which is penetrating deeply into the ranks of the workers of basic industry. Among the most recent endorsements of the Workers' Bill are those of the International Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union, the Amalgamated Iron, Tin and Steel Workers, the United Textile Workers. This followed upon the endorsements of such important organizations as an eastern conference representing 18,000 members of the International Association of Machinists, another representing 10,000 members of the Brotherhood of Railroad Engineers, District No. 13 of the United Mine Workers, districts of the Brotherhood of Painters, the Newspaper Guild, etc. When it is remembered that the General Executive Council of the A. F. of L. took especial pains to communicate with locals and central labor bodies, condemning the Workers' Bill as being Communist and "unconstitutional" and pleading for support of the Wagner-Lewis Bill, it is obvious that when important organizations go on record

in favor of the Workers' Bill, the need of genuine unemployment and social insurance is being keenly felt.

At the same time, other unemployment organizations have been compelled by their rank and file to endorse the Workers' Bill. The Socialist-controlled Workers' Committee of Chicago and the Workers' Unemployed Union of New York, after resisting for a long time, have been forced by the endorsements of their membership over the head of the leadership also to endorse the Workers' Bill. Similarly, the National Unemployed League, controlled by the Mus-  
teites, who last year endorsed the Workers' Bill but refused to carry on any campaign in support of it, were forced to endorse it at their recent convention.

This growing movement explains why Roosevelt again speaks so pathetically about the need of "social security" and the "right of the people" to "social insurance". The work of the Communist Party and the revolutionary organizations in popularizing the Workers' Bill and bringing it to the front in all struggles, has taken root. Roosevelt, in order to forestall this development, has decided once more to dedicate time to "study" the question.

#### ROOSEVELT WILL "CRACK DOWN"

Roosevelt *seems* to be carrying on this campaign in face of a growing opposition of leading industrialists to all and every kind of unemployment insurance, as being an unnecessary burden on industry, as tending to promote idleness and unwillingness to work, etc. Roosevelt thus is playing his usual demagogic role. He is the "great champion" of the "forgotten man", compelled to "crack down" on the capitalists in this field. This "cracking down" will be just as effective as the attacks of the N.R.A. on Weir, Budd, etc. It is part of the same game that, when bidding for power, Hitler played in Germany. Thus, Harry Hopkins, who is now in Europe studying the unemployment insurance systems, stated in Paris, according to the *N. Y. Times*, August 16:

*"The United States must work out a system of its own in accordance with American conditions of life. There is enough work available to keep every American busy for twenty-five years. Americans will not stand for a dole and we are going to put them to work on great public projects and pay them decent wages. There is no loss of a person's self-respect or morale under such a system."*

It is unnecessary to analyze the bluster of Mr. Hopkins about putting Americans to work on projects that will last twenty-five years. It would appear, however, that the Roosevelt government is preparing a "capitulation" before the onslaught of the capitalists in their opposition to unemployment insurance.

This opposition is not inconsequential. The Industrial Relations Counselors, Inc., embracing such people as Cyrus McCormick, Jr., Owen D. Young, etc., considers unemployment insurance a "costly experiment". The New York Board of Trade pronounces it "unsound". Owen D. Young wishes to return to the "old insurances, which were secured only by the effective contributions of the worker himself". Young has in mind merely job insurance—insurance provided by contribution of the workers and employers for such workers as today have jobs and tomorrow may be unemployed. This plan was in operation in the General Electric Works and completely collapsed in the early years of the present crisis. The New York County Lawyers Association, a powerful organization, declares that unemployment insurance is "illegal". Thus is being built up the barrage against unemployment insurance in any form, while Roosevelt, the champion, "above the battle", carries on the fight.

#### WM. GREEN ALSO "CHAMPIONS" UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

In this respect he is mimicked by his agent, Wm. Green. It is well known that at the Vancouver Convention of the A. F. of L., in 1931, Green pronounced unemployment insurance "below the dignity of American labor". By the time of the next convention in Cincinnati, in 1932, Green and the General Executive Council had reversed their position. They did not endorse genuine unemployment insurance, but put themselves in the position of favoring insurance in order better to fight against the Workers' Bill. But the deepening of the crisis has also taught Green how to use demagoguery. Green, the outspoken supporter of the N.I.R.A., who called it a "new charter of labor", now declares that if the N.I.R.A. does not function better, it may be "necessary for society to take over the means of production". Green, who declared that unemployment insurance is "degrading" and "un-American", now declares that "a campaign is now taking form to spike the President's unemployment insurance plans". He states that the A. F. of L. is "preparing to fight and to throw the whole weight of its influence behind Roosevelt's program".

The reason is clear: the campaign for the Workers' Bill is growing, while the reactionaries are trying to line up all forces both among the capitalists and the workers against the Workers' Bill.

#### INTENSIFY STRUGGLE FOR WORKERS' BILL

What are our next steps? Although the Workers' Bill has been before the workers for four years, nevertheless there are masses who do not yet know the Bill. Thus in New Jersey, a local

of the A. F. of L. endorsed the Bill, but upon receiving a letter from Green, reversed its position, because there had not been a thorough discussion of the Bill. The Philadelphia Central Labor Council unanimously endorsed the Bill, but at a subsequent meeting reversed its position, the politicians mobilizing new forces and overawing rank-and-file delegates who were none too familiar with the Workers' Bill.

There should not be a single union, fraternal, veterans', farmers' or workers' mass organization of any character, not a shop or mine, in which, through *mass distribution* of the Bill, the workers are not familiarized with it. Through thorough discussion of the Bill, more fighters for it will be created.

#### MASS CONGRESS IN WASHINGTON

*Local, county and State conferences*, and marches, leading up to a *mass congress in Washington, in January, 1935*, upon the opening of the 74th U.S. Congress, are the next steps in the fight for the Bill. The conventions of the international unions, of State federations of labor, and of the A. F. of L. in San Francisco have been or will be the scene of battles for the Workers' Bill.

A publicity campaign of broad dimensions will be undertaken. During the election campaign all candidates are to be put on record with respect to the Workers' Bill. In the Communist election campaign, the Workers' Bill will be in the very center. No struggle should be allowed to take place without bringing in the demand for unemployment and social insurance and securing endorsement of the Workers' Bill.

We must have in mind that the enactment of the Workers' Bill will not come only through resolutions and wishes. It is based on struggle, and therefore by explaining to the workers in the shops and mines the importance of unemployment and social insurance to them—the insecurity of work, the hazards of occupations, accidents, sickness, the laying off of old men, etc—we must work towards the preparation of stoppages and *strikes* for the Workers' Bill.

The struggle must be taken into all unemployed organizations. The rejection by the National Unemployed League (Muste) and by the socialist-controlled unemployed organizations, of the united front proposals of the National Unemployment Council; their continual splitting of the ranks of the unemployed; and their failure to carry on any campaign for the Workers' Bill after they were forced to endorse it by the rank and file of their organizations—make it imperative that we intensify our work among the rank and file of these unemployed organizations.



The Socialist Party has refused to endorse the Workers' Bill, but, on the contrary, has supported the Wagner-Lewis Bill. In New York, the Socialist Party endorsed the Byrne-Condon Bill, Louis Waldman carrying on a lusty campaign for it, although it would have been of no benefit to the unemployed. In Massachusetts, Alfred Baker Lewis had a bill introduced in the State legislature, which was so abominable that it was repudiated even by the representatives of the A. F. of L. The Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota has endorsed the Bill, but has done and will do nothing to mobilize the rank and file of the party for a real struggle for it. It becomes a real task, therefore, of the Communist Party members, units, Sections and Districts, to conduct a broad, energetic campaign among the membership of these parties to win them for active struggle for the Workers' Bill.

Basic to this campaign is the *building, strengthening and extending* of the Unemployment Councils. Forces must be assigned to this task in every locality—especially the industrial towns, and the united front movement be broadened. Steps toward merging the unemployed organizations should be systematically undertaken. The time is most ripe for this action.

With the continuation of the crisis, with the growing attacks on the conditions of the toiling masses, with the fascist attempts to break up all militant working class organizations—San Francisco, Bridgeton, N. J.—with the intensification of the campaign of terror of Green and Co. against the “Reds” and foreign-born in the A. F. of L., with the efforts to lower the relief and to put millions on forced labor, the fight for the Workers' Bill becomes a *central* fight. It must be coupled up with the struggle for jobs at union wages, for higher cash relief, against discrimination of Negroes, foreign-born, single and young workers, against evictions, against the rising cost of living. The growing demand for unemployment and social insurance must be crystallized into the *broadest united front mass movement* that we have yet formed.

The Communist Party units, Sections, and Districts must mobilize all forces, reach mass organizations that have not been touched with our propaganda or action; the fractions in the unions—A. F. of L., independent and T.U.U.L., in the unemployed organizations, veterans, farmer, professional and fraternal societies, must secure endorsements for the Workers' Bill, draw their organizations into the local, state and national struggles and thus make the demand for the passage of the Workers' Bill the *outstanding issue* before the United States Congress, which will compel Congress to enact it into law.