
Unemployment.

[leaflet of the Communist Party of America]
[circa Jan. 15, 1921]

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According to an archival document, some 455,000 copies of this 4-page leaflet were produced.

In every large industrial center in America today, thousands and tens of thousands of workmen and workingwomen have lost their jobs and are tramping the streets. Every day the list of unemployment grows by leaps and bounds. In New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago — from Main to California, and from the Great Lakes to the Gulf — millions of workers are idle and their families are beginning to feel the pinch of hunger and cold.

The railroads, the steel mills, the mines, the textiles, the lumber camps — the automobile and tire factories — the packing industry, the clothing industry, department stores and the thousand and one factories that produce the necessities of life are closing down or working part time at reduced wages.

A terrific industrial slump has hit this country. Manufacturers claim that they cannot get orders. Bankers claim that money is scarce. Merchants claim that their merchandise is not selling. Railroads claim that freight shipments are decreasing. Farmers claim they are compelled to sell their crops at less than cost. Cattle merchants claim that they are compelled to sell their products at ruinous prices. Perishable goods are rotting at docks or in warehouses. Stores are stocked up with goods. The farmers' crops this year have broken all past records, **and yet, in the midst of this unparalleled plenty — industries are closing down and the workers are being thrown out on the streets**

to starve and freeze!

What is the meaning of all this?

Only recently the capitalist press shrieked that what this country needed to cure it of all ills was "increased production." You were told that the unrest, discontent, and the "Red Wave" that was sweeping this country was due to insufficient production. You were told to "speed up" production as the only cure for the post-war economic and political conditions. Well, production has increased and what happened?

You produced so much that the markets are glutted and you are being thrown out of your jobs. Instead of conditions getting better, they are growing worse. Instead of higher wages and better conditions, many of you lost your jobs and the others are working at reduced wages. Does this really mean that you workers have produced too much?

Not at all. The working class could very easily consume more food, more clothing, more of all the products that they have produced. But under the present capitalist system of production commodities are produced for profit and not primarily for use. The workers get back in wages only about one-fifth of what they produce. The rest, after deducting the portion used by the capitalist class and their henchmen, is held for export to foreign markets. This surplus must be sold for profit to foreign countries.

And now we come to the main cause of the present wave of unemployment and the industrial crisis which is impending. Europe, which all dur-

ing the war and after, was the greatest purchaser of American goods, is bankrupt. It has exhausted its cash and credit. Europe is staggering under stupendous war debts. Its industries are broken down. The European workers are starving, discontented, and threatening to overthrow their capitalist governments. American bankers know this and they refuse to extend them any more credit with which to buy goods. American bankers know that the European governments can never repay the principal or the interest of the huge debts they already owe. They also know that the new working class governments, when they are established, will repudiate the debts of the present capitalist governments. Therefore the American financiers have closed down on their loans and Europe cannot purchase any more American goods. This is proof positive that European capitalism has broken down and that American capitalism, closely united with the former through the bonds of imperialism, is beginning to feel the effect of it over here.

As for the other world markets, they are also unable to absorb the surplus of American industries, for various reasons. In the first place, conditions are unstable all over the world. The masses are starving and unemployed; factories and farms are idle; many small wars are raging in every part of the globe; small nations and colonies are struggling for freedom from the great Imperialist Powers of Europe. Secondly, there is still some competition to face. Thirdly, the rate of exchange has made the dollar very dear in the international commercial market, although the dollar is very cheap in the home market.

Of course, the big American capitalists do not suffer. They shut down their factories and go off on vacations to Palm Beach or other expensive resorts. But you workers feel it. You suffer. You and your families have to go with insufficient food, clothing, and warmth. You get long vacations without pay. You get kicked out of your jobs.

But there is another angle to this industrial crisis: **the capitalist class is deliberately using**

this opportunity to reduce your wages and to destroy your labor organizations.

The capitalist class (through their Merchants', Bankers', and Manufacturers' Associations) have come out for the OPEN SHOP.

This is the situation you are facing. **The question for you workers to decide is — how are you going to meet it?**

THEIR SLOGAN IS GARYISM.

This is a critical moment for the working class of America. The capitalist game is to play the unemployed against the employed. In this way they hope to split your ranks, make you compete with one another for jobs to bring down wages and bring about the Open Shop.

Against this vicious attack you must fight and fight hard. You must bring pressure to bear upon your labor organizations to make up the challenge of the capitalist class. If your reactionary leaders and labor fakers stand in the way — **you must get rid of them and replace them with leaders from the rank and file who will do your bidding!**

You must Bring the entire pressure of the working class to bear through mass meetings — demonstrations — protests. You must use the mass strike — the general strike — the political strike to enforce your demands!

This industrial crisis is the beginning of the revolutionary movement that will eventually lead to the overthrow of the present capitalist government and the abolition of the capitalist system. American capitalism is travelling the same road as European capitalism. It is beginning to break down. **YOU WORKERS MUST FINISH THE JOB!**

Isn't it about time that you realized that you workers can get nothing worthwhile for your class under capitalism?

All you can get under capitalism is unemployment, starvation, high cost of living, dirty tenements or company-owned shacks, poverty, misery, disease, and war. If you don't like that

— and you go on strike or protest — you get policemen's clubs, injunctions, sheriff's guns, soldiers, bayonets, machine guns, and martial law. If you don't like that you get deported or jailed.

Isn't that so?

Just look back upon the history of the class struggle the last two years. The Longshoremen's Strike, the Coal Strike, the Steel Strike, the "Outlaw" Railroad Strike, the "Outlaw" Printers' Strike, the nationwide raids, the deportations, the jailings.

Where were the courts? On the side of the capitalists and against the workers.

Where were the policemen, the sheriffs, and the soldiers? On the side of the capitalists and against the workers.

Where was the Church? On the side of the capitalists and against the workers.

Where were your labor leaders? On the side of the capitalists and against the workers.

Where was the Government — local, state, and national? On the side of the capitalists and against the workers.

Certainly! They all were against you. They always will be — and they will succeed in keeping the workers divided, break your strikes, and destroy your labor organizations so long as capitalism exists and the state with all its power remains in the hands of the capitalist class.

The only way in which you can put an end to this profit system which keeps you in poverty, misery, and degradation, and gives all the good things of life to the rich, is **to conquer political power for your class, and make the working class the ruling class in society. You must first destroy the present capitalist government and establish a workers' or Soviet government in its place by force — just as did the workers and peasants of Russia!**

The time has come for the workers of America to consider the necessity of establishing a Soviet government in America!

A WORKERS' GOVERNMENT would

function for the working class and against the capitalist class. It would build up the WORKERS' CONTROL OF INDUSTRY under its protection and guidance. After it will have accomplished its purpose, during the transition period from Capitalism to Communism — after it will have abolished private ownership in the means of production and distribution, after it will have abolished all classes, after it will have crushed and suppressed all counterrevolutionary attempts to overthrow the rule of the workers, after it will have built up the workers' economic administration of industry — THE WORKERS' OR SOVIET GOVERNMENT would itself "die out" and make way for the Communist Society where all freely cooperate for the production, distribution, and enjoyment of the necessities, comforts, and luxuries of life.

That is exactly what the Soviet Government of Russia is doing.

In spite of the Allied Blockade — in spite of the counterrevolutions and invasions of Kolchak, Denikin, Yudenich, Poland, and Wrangel, all financed and operated by World Imperialism — Soviet Russia is slowly building up the **workers' control of industry and paving the way for the establishment of Communism.**

But Russia alone cannot bring about Communism. This is the task of the workers of all countries. Only the triumph of the world proletarian revolution and the defeat of world Capitalism can accomplish this gigantic task.

The European workers are waking up to this necessity. They are beginning to take lessons from their Russian comrades. The European workers realize the tremendous value of the existence of Soviet Russia and they are solidly behind it. They have notified their governments that any attack upon Soviet Russia means revolution at home.

In the meantime the European workers are preparing to overthrow their capitalist governments and establish Soviet governments in their place.

Of course, the European workers have suffered much more than you American workers. They have just gone through 6 years of the most destructive and fiendish war in the history of the world. They now realize that all the sacrifice and bloodshed and destruction was all in the interest of one or the other world groups of imperialist bandits and robbers. They realize now that the “peace” is burdened with the war debts. Industry and commerce has broken down and capitalism is tottering to its fall. The European workers are now face to face — as you workers of America will soon be — with the alternative starvation and slavery or proletarian revolution.

You workers of America are now going through the same bitter experience. You, too, were driven into the world war with the slogan “make the world safe for democracy.” You, too, were promised social justice, work, and prosperity. Like Wilson’s 14 Points, they were only promises with which to fool you and were never intended to be kept. In fact, they could not be fulfilled without abolishing the capitalist system. And surely there is no one foolish enough to think the capitalists are going to abolish the very system by which they exploit and rob the workers and reap the golden harvest for themselves!

WORKERS OF AMERICA! Don’t let yourselves be fooled by capitalist “promises” any more! You will only be betrayed again. There is only one way out of this misery, poverty, and exploitation — you must overthrow the present Capitalist government and establish a WORKERS’ or SOVIET GOVERNMENT of AMERICA.

This is not an easy task. The Capitalist government is a machine — a national machine which holds the workers by force — through its police

powers, its army, navy, courts, bureaucracy, etc. It is the instrument by means of which the capitalist class is enabled to maintain itself as the *ruling* class in society, even though they are a small minority of the population.

The capitalist government cannot be destroyed by peaceful means, such as the ballot box. The ballot box is itself an instrument of capitalist domination, cleverly developed so as to fool the workers into believing that they gain their ends through parliamentary action.

Nor can you abolish the capitalist system by seizing the factories without at the same time seizing the political power. The workers of Italy have just gone through this experience and they have discovered that without political power — without state power — the workers are bound to lose out.

The only way to overthrow the capitalist government is by means of MASS ACTION — demonstrations, protests, mass strikes, general strikes, political strikes, and culminating finally in open collision with the capitalist state — ***armed insurrection and civil war.***

Against the dictatorship of the capitalist class the working class must set up the dictatorship of the working class!

You must make your slogans:

DOWN WITH CAPITALISM!

DOWN WITH THE CAPITALIST GOVERNMENT!

HAIL TO THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT OF AMERICA!

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