

# For A United Struggle Against Starvation

Workers, White and Negro, Employed and Unemployed, Men, Women and Youth!

Members of the American Federation of Labor, of the Socialist Party, and All Other Organized and Unorganized Workers!

Impoverished Farmers, War Veterans, Office Workers, Intellectuals and Professionals!

Workers, Farmers and Impoverished Masses

## ORGANIZE AND UNITE

to Beat Back the Savage Attacks Which Are Plunging You Into Unbearable Hunger and Misery!

You Have Suffered Enough! It Is Time to Act!

Speech of William Z. Foster, Communist Candidate for President, delivered at the Chicago Coliseum, Sept. 10, 1932)

Three months ago, in this very same hall, I was nominated as the workers' candidate for President of the United States on the Communist Party ticket with a program of struggle against hunger and against a new imperialist world war.

Since then the situation for the toilers has grown worse.

Hoover has increased his hypocritical lies about returning prosperity. The bosses press daily features these lies and promises.

Roosevelt pretends to oppose Hoover's policies, but puts forth no program to relieve the people's sufferings; his program in no way differs from Hoover's.

Norman Thomas talks piously about Socialism sometime in the hazy future; he and his party stand in the way of any effective action against the starvation and suffering of the masses.

But in the meantime, the starvation and suffering of the masses rapidly grow.

Unemployment is still increasing and exceeds the startling figure of fifteen million. The majority of those still with jobs average from two to three days a week.

Wages are being reduced. The average income of the workers is today but one-third of what it was in 1929.

The workers are rapidly exhausting all of their reserves, and are compelled to exist on the most inadequate charity rations. Even this is being ruthlessly cut down and in many cases cut off entirely.

Mass starvation for the unemployed is the winter prospect.

This condition is not the result of some natural and unavoidable catastrophe.

In this, the richest country in the world, we have everything that is needed to feed, house and clothe the entire population. Yet tens of thousands are eating from garbage cans while the storehouses are filled with food that is rotting.

Millions are evicted from homes that afterwards remain unoccupied; the starving masses are forced to find shelter in the parks, in the streets and in dugouts.

Countless numbers of women are driven into the breadlines and the brothels to save themselves from actual starvation.

This is the picture of the life of the toiling masses in the richest country in the world.

### A Government of the Rich, against the Poor

Why? Because the wealth of the country is the property of the rich—a small class which holds all as its own; which operates the machines only for profit; which has no concern about the well being of the masses.

The government is not concerned with feeding the starving masses. On the contrary, it is exerting all of its power to protect the capitalists and their profits.

The last session of Congress gave five billion dollars to the banks and large corporations. It voted three billion dollars for war purposes. But this same Congress refused to give one cent to the starving workers, farmers and war veterans.

It drove the war veterans from Washington with fire and sword. But it opened its arms and lent its ear to the lobbyists of the bankers, the railroad magnates and other big capitalists who came there to tell their government what they demanded.

This policy of everything for the capitalists and nothing for the workers and farmers is the common policy of the Republican and Democratic parties alike. Both parties voted and carried through the same policy nationally, in the states and in each locality.

When it came to voting subsidies to the rich and nothing for the masses, the so-called progressives—the Borahs and LaFollettes—stood solidly on the side of the capitalists and against the toiling masses.

### It is time to act

It is time for the workers, for the toilers, the poor and oppressed, to get together and act. It is time to use the power which resides in the great numbers and strength of the working class to force the masters to yield food, shelter and clothing to those that need it. It is time to face the boss class and their government, and the politicians, high and low, with demands backed up by the united strength of the toilers and in that way overcome hunger and starvation and beat back the new attacks which the profit-greedy boss class seek to impose.

The Communist Party presents to all men and women of the working class, to all who suffer from the capitalist attacks and to the poor and distressed, a program upon which they can unite and organize their strength to carry through. We propose to the workers to consider these demands, to discuss them, to close their ranks around them, and to work out ways and means to achieve a fighting program against starvation. The Communist Party presents the following demands for the consideration of the toilers:

1. Not a penny off wages, repeal of all sales tax laws, not a penny new taxes on articles of mass consumption. Stop the capitalist attack



WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

against the living standards of the workers.

2. Not promises, but immediate relief for the starving unemployed. Not one unemployed worker or his family without decent housing, food and clothing. Fifty dollars winter relief from the Federal treasury for each unemployed worker plus ten dollars for each dependent, in additions to local relief. Stop the eviction of unemployed workers from their homes.

3. Stop the billion-dollar subsidies to banks, corporations and railroads. A Federal system of unemployment insurance at the expense of the government and employers. All relief and insurance to be financed by taxes on wealth and capitalist income, not by inflation.

4. Immediate payment of the Veterans Bonus. 5. Unconditional equality for Negroes. Smash Jim-Crowism and lynching.

6. Immediate Federal cash relief to the impoverished farmers and relief from taxes and forced collection of rents and debts. Support the farmers strike.

7. Against the new robber war. Stop the manufacture and shipment of munitions. All war funds for the unemployed. Defend the Soviet Union, defend the Chinese People.

It is clear to us that the workers will find ways and means of putting such a program into effect. If the organized and unorganized workers, workers of the A. F. of L. and of the Socialist Party, Negro and white workers, native and foreign born, will join together in common struggle irrespective to which political party they adhere, they can win these demands.

It is clear that they will work out, that they must adopt and put into effect within the factories, neighborhoods and localities, committees of struggle, such as Anti-Wage Cutting Committees in every factory, Committees of the Unemployed in every neighborhood, in every flop house, on every bread line, to fight for adequate relief. Committees of veterans to continue the fight for the bonus, Committees of farmers to fight evictions and to resist the forced collection of rents and debts, Committees of rank and file workers in the A. F. of L. unions, uniting these committees on a local, and eventually on a wider scale. This will become such a powerful united front that it will be irresistible. The toilers, with such united action, will be able to turn back the attacks of the greedy, profit-seeking capitalists.

The hour has struck for a broad, fighting united front of the oppressed. This is what the Communist Party calls for—a united front of the suffering masses, to unite the full strength of the toilers regardless of all differences of race, creed, color, age, sex, and of different political affiliations for one united fight to obtain food, clothing and shelter for all.

### There is plenty for all

Voices in the ranks of the workers, echoing the propaganda of the capitalists, say that there is no money to provide for these necessities of life. These voices say that in almost every place the local and state governments are failing, that they are bankrupt and therefore cannot give relief.

This plea of bankruptcy is false. It is true that the capitalist governments have almost emptied their treasuries in giving back tax rebates to capitalists and in expenditures for police and militia to protect capitalist property. It is true that they have spent billions in preparations for new plunderous wars, for enormous graft, for huge salaries, and so on. For this they must be condemned.

But no unit of government is bankrupt while it

has under its jurisdiction the enormous accumulated wealth of the rich, of the capitalist class. Of what use are these accumulated riches if within its shadow men, women and children are to die of starvation?

The big capitalists and financiers, the Morgans, the Rockefellers, the power and electric trusts, the big automobile magnates, they have huge surpluses and at the expense of the masses are accumulating even greater fortunes. Why should those who have built up the riches of the country, that have turned out untold quantities of goods by their sweat and toil, go hungry and die while the rich add to their ill-gotten gains.

There is plenty and to spare for all. Through our united strength, by taxation upon dividends, corporation profits and surpluses; by doing away with the expenditures for military and war purposes, by increasing inheritance taxes, the capitalists can be forced to provide the funds to feed the hungry masses.

### It can be done

There are people that say it cannot be done. There are those that tell the masses to bide their time and starve, to await a future deliverance. But the lie is given to these counsellors of despair, to those that would turn the toilers into servile slaves so as to keep up the profits of the master class.

Every day the workers, by uniting their strength, show that in the midst of this crisis wage cuts can be defeated and relief won.

The heroic struggle of the St. Louis unemployed through which they compelled the city authorities to place 13,000 families back on the relief lists, shows what can be accomplished through united mass struggle. The St. Louis city government like most of the municipalities pleaded bankruptcy, but when 15,000 unemployed demonstrated for relief they soon found the means to grant their demands.

The recent victory of the Warren steel workers in defeating the eight per cent wage cut, their successful strike despite the fact that the A. F. of L. leaders had agreed to this wage cut, shows the power of united mass action.

Innumerable examples of local struggles can be cited in which the workers in the neighborhoods defeated evictions and stayed the hands of those who would make the workers homeless.

It is time to quit listening to those voices who say nothing can be done. It is time to rely upon our own strength and through organized mass action to obtain what the bosses and their agents now deny us.

### Can the A. F. of L. leaders and Socialist Party be relied upon to obtain relief?

No! The A. F. of L. leaders, the Socialists headed by Norman Thomas, the reactionary leaders of a fascist stripe such as Cox and others, talking very radical, bewail the conditions of the workers, speak of greater distress, utter empty warnings, but all of these are empty words. They do not attempt to organize the workers to struggle against the capitalist attacks. By their deeds they attempt to liquidate the heroic fights of the toiling masses. They pit the employed against the unemployed. They try to prevent the unity of the native and foreign born workers. In practice they help to enforce the starvation program of the employers.

The A. F. of L. has forced through wage cuts among the miners, the A. F. of L. textile leaders have carried through huge wage slashes among textile workers, the railroad labor chiefs have put through a ten per cent wage cut upon this large section of the working population and are now preparing new wage cuts. The A. F. of L. is bitterly opposed to unemployment insurance.

The Socialist administration of Milwaukee has kept the unemployed on starvation rations, has broken up unemployed demonstrations and thrown unemployed leaders into jail.

The capitalists fully understand the role of the Socialist Party. While they prefer to maintain the two party system they are glad to have the Socialist Party as a reserve which tries to gather up the disillusioned workers, who break away from the Republican and Democratic parties. Already faith in these misleaders has done untold harm to the workers' conditions.

The workers must rely upon their united strength, not upon these misleaders.

### How shall we fight?

The demand of the masses for decent food, clothing and shelter will bring results only to the extent that it is backed up by organized mass struggle. Committees of the workers, the unemployed, the farmers and the ex-servicemen must constantly be on the job before city councils, budget commissions, county boards, relief bodies, etc., to fight for the interests of the impoverished masses. It is essential to back up these activities with the broadest mass activities with demonstrations for relief, protest strikes against wage cuts and struggles against the stagger system in the shops, and struggles against evictions.

It is essential for the unemployed masses backed up by the workers in the shops to carry through

systematic and continuous activities, including great mass demonstrations for their demands upon the local governments.

The war veterans must through demonstrations before the city, county and state governments, fighting for immediate relief now, rally stronger forces to carry forward a broader national struggle for the payment of the bonus and against reduction of their disability allowances.

By means of demonstrations and strikes, mass actions against evictions, the starving farmers can defeat mortgage foreclosures, tax collectors and the exploiting market monopolies.

United mass actions in the neighborhoods and on a city-wide scale, employing all possible means, can go far toward accomplishing the defeat of the starvation program of the capitalists.

### Make demands upon Congress during and after the Election

The workers must take measures to unite these local struggles and develop them not only against the local, county and state governments, and against the bosses of individual shops, but should make the struggles constantly broader, involving greater masses of workers, employed and unemployed, farmers and ex-servicemen.

These local activities must lead up to demonstrations against the Hoover government, against the national government of hunger and starvation, to achieve immediate relief and unemployment insurance, to secure the payment of the veterans bonus, to compel this government of the master class to meet the needs of the oppressed. Solidifying their ranks, building their committees everywhere, they can face Congress, the Senate and the President with an irresistible force that will achieve results.

On December 5, Congress will meet again in Washington. Its program will be to give new billions to the banks and corporations, to place new taxes upon the masses, while lightening the tax burden of the capitalists, to vote new funds for imperialist war, to defeat the veterans bonus and to refuse unemployment relief and insurance.

The congressmen who go to Washington will be bound up with the political parties of the rich. If the poor wish to have their voices heard, if they wish to raise their demands in Washington, then they must elect their own direct representative and go to Washington themselves.

Therefore, the development in each locality of united struggles for relief must have in view the coming struggles in the winter, which will include also the demands upon Washington and Congress. Broad mass delegations should be elected throughout the country during the months of October and November, which will place before Congress when it opens the most burning immediate demands of the masses.

These demands should be worked out and adopted in each locality by broad unity conferences under the leadership of elected committees set up to lead the struggle against starvation.

The Communist Party is pledged to support those demands the masses adopt for themselves.

These struggles will give organization, consciousness, power, to achieve the decisive way out of the misery of capitalism, the revolutionary way out—the only way that can permanently lift the toilers from the slavery of the profit system, place the workers and poor farmers in control of the government, and establish the basis for the building of Socialism in the United States.

### The Election Campaign must be a mass struggle for bread

We stand in the midst of an election campaign. The capitalist parties—the Republicans and Democrats and the Socialist Party, are making many promises, are using deceptive phrases, but all of them are trying to restrain the masses from struggle in order to keep the profit system intact.

The Communist Party comes forward with a program to arouse and organize the suffering masses, in order by their mass power to force the granting of immediate relief at the expense of the capitalists. Through the election campaign the Communist Party expects to deliver heavy blows against the capitalists and to weld the ranks of the working class in the struggle for their immediate needs and finally for the overthrow of the capitalist system.

Mass support to the Communist candidates means mass support to the united struggles of the working class. A vote for the Communist Party candidates is a vote for unity in the ranks of the workers. A vote for the Communist ticket is a blow struck against the capitalist offensive. A vote for the Communist candidates, for the Party of the poor and the oppressed, means to forge powerful links to the chain of unity. A huge Communist vote will be the challenge of struggle thrown into the faces of the rich and their lackeys. It will give a powerful impetus to the defensive struggle of the workers and help to turn them into a counter offensive against the workers enemies.

Workers, toilers, and impoverished masses. Make the program of united struggle your program. The fourth winter of the crisis rapidly approaches. It deepens. Misery multiplies. Throw aside the differences which keep you divided. Bring all your forces into play. Mass struggles against every local politician and their political parties, against city councils and relief bureaus, against the big corporations and the city government. Form your committees of struggle. Not a single man, woman or child must be without decent food, clothing and shelter in the coming winter. Into the fight with one will, with one purpose, with our ranks united.

Vote Communist on November 8th!

Build the Communist Party!

Organize the mass struggles of all toilers against the capitalist program of misery and hunger!