

WE MUST FOLLOW ST. LOUIS, SAYS FOSTER

"St. Louis Demonstration Sent Shiver Through Capitalist Class"

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For years past the workers of St. Louis have submitted without serious resistance to rapidly worsening conditions. Especially is this true since the onset of the economic crisis. But now the workers have woken up with a bang. At present they are in a state of deep ferment and active movement. The big demonstrations of the unemployed on July 8 (5,000) and July 11 (15,000) were unparalleled in the history of this city. The movement now developing among the St. Louis workers is full of the greatest possibilities. It is, together with the National Bonus March, an outstanding signal of the growing fighting spirit of the American working class and of the big struggles looming ahead. It is a striking demonstration of our ability to set in motion mass movements of the workers where we correctly apply

the Party line.

Stop Hunger Program.

The situation in St. Louis was very



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like that to be found in hundreds of other cities. The unemployed were on a starvation relief system when the capitalist government, rather than raise tax rates, proceeded drastically to cut the relief. Among such measures was the arbitrary dropping of 15,000 families from the relief lists. This meant to throw at least 75,000 people immediately into starvation.

In many cities the capitalist governments are getting away scathless with these inhuman relief reductions. But not so in St. Louis. The Party and the Unemployed Councils were on the job. Prior to the relief reductions they had been carrying on active work among the unemployed by the holding of public hearings, fighting against evictions, carrying on general agitation, popularizing the demands of the unemployed, etc. Hence, as soon as the relief reductions went into effect the Unemployed Councils were able to respond

with a fighting policy. The time was well chosen and the demands appropriate. Consequently, the masses responded in great numbers and with extreme militancy. The story of their brave struggle, in which they sent many police to the hospital in the face of attacks by tear gas, guns, etc., has already been told in the Daily Worker. Four workers were shot and 48 arrested.

New "Spirit of St. Louis"

The demonstrations had such a mass character and were so militant that the city government betrayed genuine alarm. The newspapers warned of the rising spirit of resistance among the workers. A shiver of apprehension swept through the capitalist class. They got a taste of the unsuspected fighting spirit of the workers. The "Spirit of St. Louis" took on a new meaning. Hence concessions had to be made to the un-

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Demonstration Sent Shivers Thru Bosses

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employed. Under the pressure of the first demonstration the city agreed to put the 15,000 families back upon the relief lists, even though just a few days before the capitalist politicians had said that this was totally impossible. Under the pressure of the second demonstration the city government, within two days, appropriated \$200,000 for emergency relief and then went on record to raise \$6,400,000 more. The whole struggle was a graphic demonstration of the power of the masses, led by the Unemployed Councils and the Party, to force concessions from the reluctant government. Without organization the "concessions" will vanish into thin air. Advantage must be taken of the victorious struggle to build a solid movement of the unemployed, to establish the T.U.U.L., to recruit for the Party.

Organize Movement.

Now the problem is to organize this mass movement. Block committees must be set up all over the city and they must take up a detailed defense of the interests of the unemployed. The Unemployed Councils must be built up and come forward upon every occasion with its demands as the champion and leader of the unemployed. The opportunity is now here for us to really lead and refresh the vast mass of the jobless. A big united front defense movement must be launched, intensive building of the Party must be initiated, large numbers of workers are now making applications. Failure to carry out these elementary tasks would, of course, soon result in dissipating this splendid movement of the workers.

Largest Meeting Held.

It happened that in the midst of this movement my scheduled St. Louis meeting took place. It was the largest ever held by us in this territory, 1800 being present, of whom 30 per cent were Negroes. The workers displayed a wonderful spirit, 50 joining the Party and the Y.C.L. at the meeting.

In many cities our Party stands idly by while the city governments ruthlessly cut unemployment relief. This big movement now developing in St. Louis shows the possibilities for us where essentially the right line is followed. In St. Louis our Party forces are very small, but despite this hardship the Party was able to lead this big movement. The District 8 is now reinforcing these forces by efficient workers in the unemployed work from Chicago. Other cities would do well to pattern after St. Louis and really take the lead of the unemployed. The lessons of the St. Louis movement must be studied and popularized at once. It is high time that our Party should really go into action in this unemployed issue. St. Louis shows what can be done with the most meagre forces.