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PROBLEMS OF THE AMERICAN WORKING CLASS. NO. 2

The Trade Union Question
The Unemployed Question
Labor Defense
The Agrarian Question

PROGRAMATIC DOCUMENTS

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THE AGRARIAN QUESTION

Capitalism liberated agriculture from its primitive stagnation, drew it into world-wide economic development and lifted it from the drudgery of the Middle Ages and patriarchal times. Capitalism did not, however, do away with the misery, oppression and poverty of the great masses in the country, but on the contrary, it re-created these conditions of primitivism in new forms and restored their old forms on a new basis.

Beginning with 1850, American agriculture had become completely divorced from its old colonial self-sufficiency and entered into a new stage of commercial agriculture. At that period English agriculture reached its declining stages. Its farming population decreased steadily as a result of the declining profits in farming after the abolition of the bread tax. The land became neglected and unproductive. The enormous capital required for the regeneration of the land made its abandonment necessary. English industry and commerce had just entered a period of great industrial expansion. Lucrative interests and profits were found by the English capitalists in other fields of commerce with less risk for their investments. The lands were turned into permanent pastures to supply the raw materials required by English industry.

In America, English capitalism found in abundance that which was less profitable to produce herself, viz: food to feed her thriving cities and raw materials for her industries. American agriculture readily accepted this enormous and very profitable task and thus began to expand and modernize its methods of production in order to meet the demands made upon it.

Capitalism in America, during that period, was very weak. Its activities were limited to a few minor small-scale industries. It was forced to import ready-made merchandise from foreign countries primarily England. It had great aspirations and plans to develop into an industrial empire. That, however, required capital, machinery and raw materials.

With the passage of the Homestead Act, the "abolition" of chattel slavery in the South and the extension of the railroad, new frontiers were opened up for exploitation. The new timber lands in the North, the cheap Negro labor in the South, the colonization of millions of acres of virgin soil, supplied American capitalism with enormous surpluses which were exported and in return industrial commodities kept flowing back into America. In order to assure itself of the monopoly on its home market American capitalism passed tariff restriction laws, keeping out as much foreign competition as possible. Capital, however, kept flowing in, in forms of loans and investments in railroads.

American agriculture continually expanded to such extents as was demanded upon it by industrial capitalism in order to repay the loans and interests on the loans. The great Western migrations had exactly this task to perform, that of supplying cheap and enormous surpluses of grains, livestock, cotton, tobacco, timber, wool, etc. More and more virgin soil had to be broken in order to produce cheaply and in greater abundance for export.

American capitalism lived on the backs of the agrarian masses during this whole period, piling up enormous profits on their produce, while at the same time engaging in land speculations, licensing monch at high interest, evicting homesteaders from profitable farms, and slowly transforming America from an agricultural into an industrial and commercial economy.

This policy of American capitalism brought upon the expanding agricultural industry a number of evils and contradictions and at times interrupted its normal process of growth. While agriculture had to produce cheaply and on a mass scale basis, it was forced to pay exorbitant prices on the tariff protected industrial commodities, railroad costs on transportation, high interests on their loans and enormous land-rents to the speculators. Periodic crisis set in. Protest movements were organized, however, with little success. American agriculture actually enjoyed the European monopoly and therefore felt secure in its economic position. On the other hand, while agricultural commodities kept falling in price, the land it owned kept climbing in value, while industry kept growing stronger and wealthier.

Beginning with 1900, the pressure of industrial capitalism on agriculture was greatly relieved. American industry was fully ready to flood the world market with low priced industrial commodities. Plants and workshops began to boom, labor was in great demand and therefore the doors of American factories were opened up to millions of immigrants from all over the world. A tremendous home market opened up, using up great quantities of its own produce. Agriculture found itself producing for this home market almost exclusively. Prices on agricultural commodities kept rising; from 1900 to 1910 the price on wheat rose 79% and the average on all commodities was 65%. The value of land doubled. The war period, 1915-20, found American agriculture in a mad rush to supply the allies and American militarism with the necessary breadstuffs, meats, tobacco and raw materials, in order to continue the war. The demand upon American agriculture was gigantic. Industry kept booming and prices on its commodities kept blowing upwards at rapid strides. American industry supplied the allies with all the necessary war materials. The net result was that in a few short years American capitalism emerged out of its position of debtor of 1 billion dollars into that of creditor of 16 billions. While more and more factories were springing up, more and more virgin soil had to be broken up for exploitation. Marginal and sub-marginal lands, irrigated lands and dry farming were put into operation. The American farmer looked hopefully into the future when he would be able to retire in comfort and plenty and the industry will continue its prosperity but under younger and more able management.

But 1920 wrote finish to this chapter of American agriculture.

CAPITALISM IN AGRICULTURE

In a period of 76 years - from 1850 to 1920 - the land value of all farms in the United States had risen from 4 billions in

1850 to 77 billions in 1920. Over 70 billions of dollars were pocketed by the speculators, landlords and bankers.

The total number of farms have steadily increased from one and a half millions in 1850 to six and a half millions in 1920. The total farm land under operation continually increased, and in 1920 counted one billion acres, 520 millions of which were cultivated. The crop land alone represented 41% of the total land under cultivation.

The enormous development of capitalism in agriculture can best be measured, however, by the expenditures on hired labor, commercial fertilizer, machinery, the total value of its annual production and the enormous increases in land capital. The value of farm buildings have increased from 3½ billions in 1900 to 11½ billions in 1920. The value of livestock has risen from 3 billions 75 millions in 1900 to over 8 billions in 1920. The number of hired laborers increased steadily and in 1920 reached 4½ millions. The total expenditures on hired labor increased from 521 millions in 1910 to 1100 millions in 1920. The expenditures on commercial fertilizer increased from 53 millions in 1900 to 326 millions in 1920. The expenditures on feed increased 265% from 1910 to 1920. The total value of farm products have increased annually from 4½ billions in 1900 to 14 billions in 1919.

The post-war crisis overturned the upward trend of American agriculture and sent it toppling downward without hardly a let-up. The ten years following - 1920 - 30 - found agriculture heading deeply into permanent crises out of which it can never emerge under capitalism. The land values fell fully 20 billions. Livestock declined 2 billions; machinery and implements 293 millions. The farming population shifted into the cities. Farms have decreased by 2½% during that period. Evictions and foreclosures and bankruptcies have increased 6 times the former figures. A more detailed analysis will be given later.

It is noteworthy to see exactly how the entire farming population fared during the prosperous period of expanding agriculture. The tables here will show that the great masses of farmers and their dependents have never enjoyed any prosperity, on the contrary, the whole period of expansion found the masses on the farms in great poverty and want. Particularly the Negro masses, who have suffered untold hardships during that whole period.

TABLE I

TOTAL FARMS - LAND - VALUE

<u>1930</u>	<u>White</u>		<u>Negro</u>	
Number of farms	5,372,578		916,070	
All land in farms	945,683,034	-95%	41,087,982	-4.3%
Value of land & bldgs.	\$46,277,070,671	-96%	\$ 1,602,767,687	-3.3%
Value of machinery	\$ 3,229,665,536		\$ 71,988,945	

TABLE 2

<u>1930</u>	<u>WHITE</u>		<u>INCREASE OVER 1920</u>
Full owners	2,752,787	minus -	500,000
Part owners	612,887	plus -	85,000
Cash tenants	387,834	minus -	70,000
Share cropper	1,566,303	plus -	300,000
Managers	52,889	minus -	13,000
Total decrease -			198,000

<u>1930</u>	<u>NEGRO</u>		<u>INCREASE OVER 1920</u>
Full owners	158,000	minus -	35,000
Part owners	43,000	minus -	4,000
Cash tenants	101,000	minus -	90,000
Share croppers	608,000	plus -	80,000
Managers	5,122	plus -	1,000
Total decrease -			46,000

The increasing poverty amongst the masses of agrarians can be seen by the continuous decrease in the number of full owners and the increase in share croppers. The whitefarmer increased in the richer capitalistic farm by 85,000, while the Negro capitalist farmer has steadily diminished. Sharecropping is particularly increasing in the South, where 60% of the total farm operators were tenants or croppers.

What is of great significance is that in the owners group there are included 498,000 self-sufficient farms, 339,000 part time and 288,000 unclassified farms. The poorest and lowest strata of the owners are the "self-sufficient" and "part-time" farms. Their capitalization is the smallest of all groups. Their annual expenditure on fertilizer was \$24.00 per farm and labor \$42.00. Although they constitute 1/6 of the total number of farmers, their annual income is only 1.9% of the total.

Amongst the unclassified are a number of varieties, mostly however subsistence or squatter farms, whose income does not reach the \$250 mark per annum.

SHIFT IN POPULATION

The shift in the rural and farm population is very indicative of the struggle raging on the farms. The total farm population in 1930 was 30 1/2 millions - a decrease of 4% from 1920. 24% of the total population live on farms, this number constituting 56% of the rural population. In 1920 the percentage was 30% and 61.5%. The migrations are particularly active in the Southern States where 425,000 left the rural provinces; the total for the whole United States was 1,200,000. In the period of 1920 - 30 - 198,000 white and 46,000 Negro farmers lost or gave up their farms. Tenancy increased from 25% of total farms in 1880 to 38% in 1920. In 1930 the total reached

42%. In Georgia and Mississippi the percentage of tenants was 72%.

HIRED LABOR

The pressure exerted upon the farmer during the upward swing of American capitalism demanded an intensified agriculture of high concentration and mass production. Therefore, highly specialized and commercial farming was more profitable and better suited the conditions. That demanded an army of agricultural wage-laborers who could be hired and fired at the demand of the season. A free migratory army, who travel from one section to another during planting or harvesting seasons - cotton, vegetables, fruit, tobacco pickers, machine operators, dairymen, gardeners, etc. Statistics are not available for the early period of expenditures on hired labor. In 1910 the expenditures totalled 521 million dollars. In 1920 the amount more than doubled - 1 billion, 98 million; while in 1930 the amount dropped to 955 million - a decrease of 13%.

The number of working days done by hired laborers on farms in 1930 was 140,984,000. The number of hired laborers in 1930 was 2,732,972 - an increase over 1920 by 400,000 (1920-2,336,009); while the wages dropped by 13%. The workers received a 30% wage cut during this period. Including the farmers' relatives working on the farm, there were approximately 4½ million farm laborers in 1930. Included in this group are 600,000 women farm workers. In 1930 one million children were working on farms. 2,631,601 farms reported hiring labor. This is a decrease of 44,000 from 1919.

TABLE 3 VARIETY OF FARMS - EXPENDITURES ON LABOR, ETC.
1930

	<u>No. of Farms - %</u>	<u>Exp. on labor</u>	<u>% of value of products</u>
Fruit farms	141,418 2.2	\$1054	4.3
Truck farms	84,561 1.3	1084	2.2
Ranches	71,000 1.1	1162	4.6
Crop Speciality	431,379 6.9	433	7.6
Cash grain	454,726 7.2	375	12.
General farms	1,044,266 16.6	174	14.
Cotton	1,640,025 26.1	215	15
Dairy	604,837 9.6	399	15.2
Animal speciality	479,042 7.6	345	15.8
Poultry	166,517 2.6	234	3.
Self-sufficing	498,019 7.9	42	1.9
Part time	339,000	?	
Unclassified	288,000 10.9	?	1.8

Hiring of agricultural labor differed in the various States in accordance with the intensity and size of the farms. The percentage in Mississippi was 13% compared with 74% in North Dakota and 83% in New York, Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

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70% of the managers farms were exploiters of labor. The average number of days of hired labor was the smallest in the Southern States and particularly heavy amongst the large capitalist farms. The average for the South was 100 days compared with 500 days in Iowa, and 724 in Arizona. The rich manager farms in Louisiana had an average of 5,124 days of hired labor.

Wages steadily decreased with the increase of hired laborers. In 1920 the average monthly wage was \$47.00 and only \$34.00 in 1930. In the South, the average daily wage in this period was 75¢.

The propertyless agricultural laborers met with enormous competition from the poor owner-farmers who were compelled by poverty to work away from their own farms. Over 2 millions were forced to seek employment on other farms or in city factories each year. 65% owned their own farms and 35% were tenants or croppers. 50% of the total worked on the average of 250 days per year.

FARM DEBTS

While American capitalism was developing its industries, grew rich on the enormous surpluses the farming population was supply them, particularly during the period of 1900 - 20, when capitalism drew the agricultural industry into mass production and further expansion, the great masses of agrarians were reduced to a status of permanent debtors subject to the whims and interests of the bankers and speculators. In 1910 over 1 million farmers had their properties mortgaged to the sum of 3½ billions. In 1910 - 20 the mortgaged farms increased by 18%, while the amount increased 130%. In 1930 the total amount reached 12 billions, not including the debts on taxes, feed, fertilizer and similar debts. The heaviest burdens on mortgages are suffered by the farmers in the northwest, where the average was as high as 67%. The general trend during the whole period of capitalist agriculture was the elimination of the small farmer from the competitive market and his conversion into share-cropping or subsistence farming. The large capitalist farmers were better able to corner the market through cooperative pools which they controlled, and keep the poor farmers away from. The poor farmers could only get rid of their surplus produce by selling it to the rich farmer at a lower price.

The post-war crisis accelerated this competitive struggle on the farm due to the steady diminishing of the world market and the fall in prices to below the 1914 level without the commensurate decrease in prices of industrial commodities. The process of eliminating altogether the poor farmers increased in tempo each year. Thus we see the elimination in 1930 of 2½% in the form of evictions and forced sales - a decrease in owners and a tremendous increase in sharecropping and subsistence farming. In percentages there are laborers, tenants, croppers and part time farmers 61%, and owners and managers 37%, of which 8% are poor agrarians or American peasants and 42% have their farms mortgaged. The poor farms show a steady

decrease in acreage under cultivation. In 1930 farms under 3 acres increased 111%, 3 to 9-17%, while the middle farms between 50-100-500 acres have decreased 8%. The large capitalist farms of 1000 acres and over have increased 25%.

DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH

The unequal distribution of wealth and property of the various strata of farmers can be seen by their annual income and value of farm property. Out of a total of 5,799,882 farms, who sold part or the whole of their produce in 1920 - 30 - 3,865,261 had an income of \$250. to \$1500 - 1,700,000 had an income of \$1500 to \$6000, while while 234,006 had an income of \$6000 to over \$20,000 per year. Over one half a million farmers in 1930 did not produce a sufficient surplus to give them enough cash to pay taxes, aside from other needs.

Another illustration can be shown by the average owners of milk cows. Only 4,615,529 farms owned cows in 1930, totalling 21,124,221, 99.4% of the farms owned 84% of the total cows, while 0.6% owned 16% of the total. 50% of the farms owned from 1 to 3 - 49.4 owned from 3 to 19.

THE CRISIS TODAY

The world capitalist crisis of 1929-35 accelerated the crisis of American agriculture into a permanent crisis and threw the whole countryside into upheaval and revolt. Prices on agricultural commodities dropped to below cost. The drought in the Northwest had ruined thousands of farmers through devastation of crops, livestock and land. The vast unemployment of the American masses, as well as the closed foreign markets, overstuffed the storerooms and warehouses with agricultural commodities begging for a market. The carry-overs actually trebled each year. Hundreds of thousands of farmers were forcefully evicted by the United States government and bankers because of debts on taxes and mortgages. While between 12 and 15 millions unemployed were starving, the bankers shouted "over-production" and clamored for a curb on production and arbitrary price-fixing. The United States government minimized the terrific suffering of the masses and refused to appropriate funds to relieve their hunger. The Hoover administration set up the Farm Board and passed the McNary-Haugen Bill, only to place the control of the farm industry into the hands of the bankers. The whole farming population became aroused and revolted against the exploitation and misery which was their lot. The grain elevators, the processors, dairy companies and bankers allied together in cheating and robbing the farmers by forcing them to sell at below cost. The bankers and local governments officials.

demanded the payments of debts and taxes right after harvest, when prices were at low points. The spearhead of the strike movement to force the government for relief and against evictions, was the Northwest. Militant strikes spread to other parts of the country by the agrarian laborers for relief and better living conditions. Capital investments were threatened with enormous losses and the Roosevelt administration had to step in to protect its interests. The AAA was set up. The first step was to put into practice what the bankers and landlords were agitating for, viz: "control" of production and price-fixing. The domestic allotment plan, the setting up of codes, the processing tax, a two billion mortgage re-financing and inflation, were some of the plans behind the AAA. The government forced the farmers to curb their production and destroy their surpluses. The partial payment in the form of a bonus which is to be paid to the farmers if they cut production, was to come out of the processing taxes to be collected from the flour mills, packers and canners. The miserable relief, which the local FERA distributed, was cut off unless the farmer entered into such contracts with the AAA, and only after he had mortgaged every piece of chattel on the farm. The big farmers, landlords and bankers were the real beneficiaries from the triple A. The two billion mortgage re-financing went into the pockets of the bankers. The processing tax reverted back on the shoulders of the farmers and the city proletariat. The big capitalist farmers collected hundreds of thousand dollars in bonuses without depleting their stock and farms. While the poor farmer was reduced more and more into subsistence farming and poverty. Today, the triple A is attempting to remove two million farmers from the land and put 40 million acres of cultivated land out of production. Inflation on which some farmers looked with favor, resulted in their further ruination. The disparity between industrial and agricultural prices widened. On the 1914 level, farm prices are today 70% and industrial prices 125%.

Agriculture however, always lagged behind industry even in its ascendancy. The following table illustrates the contrast between industrial growth and agriculture:

TABLE 4

<u>Year</u>	<u>Income from all industries</u> <u>in millions</u>	<u>Agriculture</u> <u>in millions</u>	<u>% of Agriculture</u>
1910	31,430	4,988	16.6
1915	37,205	5,488	14.8
1920	73,999	11,057	14.9
1925	81,931	9,089	11.1
1928	89,419	8,109	9.3

THE SOUTH

The South was always noted for its poverty-stricken population, its backwardness and its terrific exploitation and persecution of the Negro Population. The agrarian situation in the South is linked up with the Negro Question and their struggles for social, political as well as economic emancipation. This question is dealt with in a separate thesis. The Civil War "freed" the Negroes from chattel slavery and transformed them into propertyless wage-laborers and sharecroppers depending upon the same heartless landlords and plantation owners for their livelihood. The Negro farmer at no time enjoyed the partial prosperity of ascending capitalist agriculture. Their farms were always the poorest. The value of the average white farm in the country was always five times more than the Negro farm, as the following table will show:

TABLE 5

	<u>White</u>	<u>Negro</u>
	<u>Value per farm</u>	
Owners	\$ 9,339	\$ 2,000
Half owners	13,124	2,120
Managers	41,321	18,600
Cash tenants	7,554	1,767
croppers	7,422	1,588

The South has seen the crystallization of a permanent landlord class and absentee landlordism. The poor white farmer in the South suffers, equal, or even worse, poverty and starvation as his Negro neighbors. The plantation owners favor the hiring of Negro croppers because of their large families and also because they can terrorize and cheat them without fear or mercy. The white croppers are not so easily cheated and are therefore exiled to the arid and unproductive regions. Starvation and disease are rampant in the whole South. Since the triple A, the negro and white croppers are cheated out of this relief and bonuses by the landlords on some false pretense. The process of eliminating the negro and white croppers from the land and converting them into wage laborers has been accelerated since the A.A.A. The landlords there receive the full amount of the bonus without having to split with the croppers. Wages are as low as 7 to 10 cents an hour. Unemployment is steadily increasing, the supply being 60% over the demand. Jim Crow laws, terrorization and lynchings keep the great masses of Negroes and white tenants in utter misery and darkness. Illiteracy amongst both groups is still as high as 25%. The death rates are always rising due to pellagra and T.B.

The landlords exploit the croppers by charging them exorbitant prices for feed, fertilizer and food in the stores they set up on the plantations. They force the croppers to sell them their cotton at low prices. The interests on the credits that the croppers receive in the stores are as high as 10 to 12%. Their income is hardly enough to buy them dry bread and pork for the whole year as the following table will show. The table below represents a typical cotton community in N. Carolina. In 1921 the conditions illustrated by the table were typical of the whole South. Today it is even worse.

Per Day	White		Negro	Per Day
	Cash per year	Farms	No. of Farms	Cash per year.
34 cents	\$626	135 owners	41	\$597
14 cents	251	38 tenants	66	289
8 cents	153	13 croppers	36	197

The white tenants and croppers in the South have smaller annual incomes than the negroes. The land they are on is dry and unproductive. These states who boast about their old traditions of glory and hospitality and gloat over their enormous natural resources, their beautiful playgrounds and special style of cooking, allow the great masses of poor negro and white farmers to starve for lack of the barest necessities of life. Such are the conditions in the "chivalrous" South today.

The Farmer Political Movement

The first National Farmers Organization was organized in Minnesota in 1867 called National Grange. Its membership consisted mainly of wealthy farmers and landlords who were dissatisfied with the monopolies of the bankers and the high cost of railroad transportation. The National Grange was loyal to the growing capitalist economy but fought for a larger share of the profits for their class. Their achievements were mainly legislative and primarily affecting only the rich farmers. Its popularity amongst the poor and middle farmers was nil.

The Farmers Alliance which succeeded the National Grange grew more popular amongst the poor farmers. They agitated for reforms which were considered "socialistic" by the reactionary bankers. Their platform consisted of many planks affecting the poor farmers; one was the nationalization of the railroads. Although they united State organizations in the East, South and South West with a membership of three millions, the very nature of their class interests prohibited them from becoming a political factor nationally. Soon afterwards the Farmers Alliance became a reactionary outfit.

In 1892 the National Peoples Party was formed at a convention in Omaha. They continued the agitation for popular reforms and succeeded in involving a great many city workers.

For the first time in American history the Peoples Party in the Presidential elections in 1892 received over one million votes, mainly in the South and West. This movement declined as is inevitable with all two class parties.

In 1915 the Non-Partisan League was formed in North Dakota. Its sphere of influence was limited to the N. West. The N-P.L. carried on a bitter struggle against the Grain Elevators and commission men who cheated the farmers unmercifully. In 1918 they succeeded with the aid of the S.P. in capturing the whole State apparatus of N. Dakota including the Governorship. Extensive reforms were started including State-owned elevators, etc. But again, the N-P.L. collapsed two years later under pressure of Industrial Capitalism and the reforms collapsed with it.

On the heels of the N-P.L. followed the Farmer-Labor Party. Gathering around itself the support of the Trade Union bureaucracy and wealthy farmers, it attracted wide influence in Minnesota where it controls the State apparatus. The Farmer-Labor Party is a very good example of the failure of two-class parties and their ultimate role of betrayers of the poor farmers and city workers who support them.

In recent years various State organizations arose representing the different strata of rural population. The Farm Holiday Association, who carried on the strike movement in the N. West, the Southern Tenants Union, The Agricultural Workers Union, etc, who are under Stalinist leadership. The struggles of the poor farmers and tenants were militant and fierce thus indicating their readiness to join with the city workers in unity of action.

Under Stalinist leadership and under the leadership of the Milo Remos whom the Stalinists supported, these struggles did not assume the correct political struggle against Capitalism. The Farm Holiday strikes were petty-bourgeois in character and were strikes in the sphere of "consumption" and not at the point of production, and therefore dissipated and defeated the aims of the workers and farmers. Particularly with the new turn the Stalinists have made in their Trade Union Policy, began the disintegration of the organized farmers' movement.

CONCLUSIONS

History has proved beyond a shadow of doubt through many struggles, defeats and victories that none but the city industrial proletariat under the leadership of a revolutionary party, can emancipate the great rural laboring masses from the yoke of capitalism and landlordism, from ruin and hunger. There is no salvation for the agrarian workers and poor farmers except by joining the revolutionary city proletariat, to support it in revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the rule of the capitalists and landlords.

The whole series of steps taken by the government under the New Deal, an alphabetical list of measures, presented in the name of the farmers are having for reaching effects upon the economy of the country as a whole. In the first place the liberal subsidies offered to certain sections of the farmers were necessary to keep down the discontent in the process of the reorganization of agriculture to fit the needs of the American Imperialists today. Whole sections of the agriculture economy are being uprooted, as uneconomical. In this process the government is attempting to shift these sections to other fields of agrarian work with as little class and social friction as possible.

America as a large exporter of raw material must, to "conquer the world" change this relation of import and export, to enable a greater export of finished commodities, products from heavy industry and capital, and at the same time enable the importers to repay America with cheap raw material and farm products. It has been proven that the colonial spheres can feed an industrial population and furnish certain raw materials cheaper than they can be produced at home.

To reduce the cost of production, and the wage level for the working population, and to enable the American Imperialist to obtain a more favorable relation on the international market between the export and import the permanent agrarian crisis of the United States has the heavy hand of the government attempting to reorganize it to the needs of the new imperialist policy. The crop control, and subsidies under the AAA and other government measures will not remedy this situation. On the contrary it will intensify the antagonisms.

The recent report of the Department of Commerce on the import and export of the United States revealed the lowest export for 40 years. They speak of a balance between import and export. This is a smoke screen. The figures only reveal the first stage of the transition under the government policy in finance, industry and agriculture - in the reorganization of the internal conditions to meet of the new imperialist policy. In the present transitional stage these figures will show a marked decline in the export of some raw material and farm products. But in the next stage the export of a vast number of industrial products and capital will enable the capitalists of the country to obtain a more balanced international trade.

This farm policy is not only directly connected with the internal reorganization; it is at the same time, the other side of the colonial policy (new imperialist policy of the United States). Unless a more fitting relation with the colonial spheres, to cut down competition from the farmers within the country, these outposts will not be held in check. A big step toward this end is a more happy relation with the export of the basic raw material and farm products from these colonial spheres.

The reorganization in the country cannot take place without political repercussions, but considering the scale

upon which this is being carried out the class and political friction so far gendered has been held in control by the ruling clique. The Southern Tenant Movement is one of the most important side issues and repercussions of this policy that cuts deep into the agrarian crisis. It will become one of the most important links for the proletariat in the struggle to overthrow capitalism.

But above all we must not lose sight of the fact that the leading agricultural states are at the same time the leading industrial states. The industrial states such as Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York, etc., are at the same time the leading agricultural states in the union. This is an important factor in considering the strategy in the struggle for power in the country.

The American proletariat will be unable to carry out its historical mission, however, if its revolutionary vanguard isolates itself and shuts itself up in its narrow Trade Union circles and restricts itself to the petty factional self-sufficiency, or to a desire and struggle to maintain the hegemony of the leadership of that party. The proletariat becomes a truly revolutionary class only by acting as the vanguard of all those who are exploited. The proletarian party becomes only then revolutionary, when it leads those struggles of the proletarian masses as their vanguard, for the overthrow of the oppressors. This it cannot achieve unless the Revolutionary party carries the class-struggle into the rural districts, and gathers around itself and educates the laboring masses in the country.

1. The revolutionary party must win first of all the hired agricultural laborers, working on the farms for wages. Organize them into industrial trade unions, draw them into the revolutionary party, educate them and train them for the great task as leaders of the rural population.

2. Secondly: It must organize the negro and white share-croppers and tenants in the South into revolutionary non-party organizations who shall receive its guidance and leadership from those enlightened and revolutionary agrarian wage laborers, for the purpose of abolishing Jim Crowism, brutal lynching and social and political discrimination of the negro masses and uniting the struggles of both negro and white agrarians with the revolutionary vanguard in the industries.

3. Thirdly: The revolutionary party must unite, gather around itself and win the numerous strata of poor farmers and petty agrarians, self-sufficient, part-time and subsistence farmers who although they own their own farms, are forced to work for wages off their farms. These American peasants whose properties are mortgaged to the hilt, and the poor and exploited negro farmers and negro and white share croppers and tenants can be educated by the proletarian vanguard to the realization that they have everything to gain by the victory of the proletariat, which brings with it the abolition of mortgages, payment of land rents in money or kind to the landlords, abolition of high interest rates on loans and the distribution of free land to the propertyless croppers, tenants

and laborers.

The vanguard party will however meet with many difficulties when dealing with these masses. For this class is primarily a seller of commodities (on a small scale) and therefore inclined to accept the propaganda and leadership of the high bourgeoisie. The task of the revolutionary party must therefore be, to concentrate its main blows against the large landlords and capitalists and their political representatives. With a consistent revolutionary policy and class struggle, involving the petty-agrarians against their main enemies, the revolutionary party will surely win the great majority of them for Socialism.

4. The revolutionary party must work towards the neutralizing the steadily diminishing middle farmers, who up to the recent world crisis were able to accumulate greater wealth and turn it into capital. These are the part owners who hire labor and carry on intensive commercial farming. The revolutionary party will find greater difficulties in its attempt to win this class toward itself and therefore its immediate task must be that of isolating them from the leadership of the agrarian movement, neutralizing their struggle against the proletariat, at the same time however, working towards uniting them with the poor agrarians in the struggle against the landlords and bankers.

5. The big landowners and capitalist farmers are the decided enemies of the revolutionary proletariat and poor farmers. The perspective of the revolutionary party shall be the agitation for unconditional confiscation of the large handholdings and farm estates, the big factory farms and southern plantations who consistently exploit and oppress the poor agrarians, the wage laborers and even to a great extent the middle farmers. Under no circumstances shall the revolutionary party allow any agitation in its ranks for payment of indemnities to the landlords and capitalists.

6. The revolutionary party can assume the political leadership of the agrarian masses, through consistent agitation and education, through consistent struggle against the oppression of the agrarian laborers and poor farmers. The revolutionary party must initiate and lead the agrarian workers in militant mass strikes against exploitation for the right of organization and a higher standard of living. It must arouse the great masses of the farm population, involving them in genuine revolutionary struggles against evictions, for the abolition of mortgages, etc., and thus put them into motion for the final victory of the proletariat and their own emancipation.

The victory of the proletariat cannot be achieved without the aid of the rural population. The rural population cannot emancipate itself without a proletarian victory.

The revolutionary party cannot achieve and lead towards victory unless it unites the struggles of town and country, of the proletariat and farmers on a revolutionary program of action, for the final overthrow of the oppressors and the establishment of a Communist Social Order.

TRADE UNION POLICY

1. The readjustment necessary for American capitalism in order to compete successfully on the world market and to check the decline in the rate of profit calls for a general reduction of the standard of living of the working class. The bosses' offensive continues with feeble resistance here and there. This resistance is checked before it develops into a powerful opposition due to the combined forces of the bosses, their government and the right wing leaders of the labor movement as well as the weak and spineless section of the progressive opposition which has not yet forsaken all of the class collaboration policies. This combined force has been able to check and head off the major upheavals. The militancy of the workers who have been driven to the wall by the prolonged crisis and mass unemployment have had their energies dispersed by the policies of the A.F. of L. right wing leadership and the absence of the militant progressive leadership of the trade union movement.

2. The industrial reorganization for the benefit of capitalism started under the NRA, and continued under the Roosevelt Social Security Plan is constantly narrowing the economic base of the old conservative A.F.L. craft unions. The whole process of machine development and mass unemployment laid the basis for this development.

This has created a contradiction for which the A.F.L. leaders have not yet found a solution. Our trade union policy must take advantage of this pressure vs. the reactionary leaders and their policy.

3. The economic changes which reached a culmination point in the crisis have deeply affected the class relations in America. The outstanding trends in the class relations produced by these changes are: (1) the INCREASED struggle between the classes; (2) the INCREASED struggle within the different layers of the capitalist class; and (3) the levelling-out process and "Europeanization" of the American working class, i.e.: language unification due to post-war immigration policy, mass unemployment affecting all layers of the working class, shifting the craft skill to a greater extent into the ranks of the sem-skilled and unskilled, more uniform lower standard of living of the class, the closing of the doors of individual escape from the class by the rising generation, etc.

4. The outstanding peculiarities of the American working class are the political backwardness in the most advanced and modern imperialist country. The fact that the overwhelming majority of the workers are not yet even organized in the elementary trade unions. These millions are not yet an active factor in the political arena vs. the capitalist parties of one shade or the other. The American workers now constitute the largest army of unemployed of any industrial country on earth and have not yet even reached the first stage of social insurance. Unemployment and its effects are still handled as a charity proposition.

5. More fundamental than the above phenomena is the fact that while the workers of Europe and Asia have been driven back by revolutionary defeats, which in turn has affected the developments of the internal and international policies of the Soviet Union

and a further disintegration of Stalinism and the world labor movement - the fact remains that the American working class is slowly surging forward and has not yet even been tested in any major battles. This in turn is part of the process of the political shift from Europe to America. Upon this background and these American peculiarities the trade union policy of the revolutionary forces will be tested and their leadership affirmed or rejected with the new trade union movement that these conditions in the decay stage are ushering in.

6. The farsighted capitalists realize this and have laid traps for the workers. The narrow class collaboration basis of the A.F.L. which has been further narrowed by the crisis, unemployment and machine development can no longer be used as the main instrument for class collaboration, unless steps to broaden it at once are taken. One important aspect of the NRA. was to lay the basis for a broader class collaboration policy, into which the A.F.L. would be incorporated providing it can be used today as it has been used in the past.

The NRA and the labor relations boards established were designed to lay the framework for a broad class collaboration base and canalization for the class struggle into safe channels if the workers' pressure became sufficient to warrant such. In this respect the workers must consider all labor "leaders" who join the labor boards or advocate such as traitors to the workers' cause. Only the organized might of the working class can obtain concessions from the capitalist class.

7. Other outstanding factors since inception of the NRA and the "labor charter" is the (1) rapid growth of the company unions, (2) the rapid growth (over a million and a half new members) of the conservative A.F.L. unions, (3) the strike struggles that developed were in the main in the hands of the conservative right wing leaders. This enabled them to behead the strikers at the very inception.

Upon the basis of these betrayals and the disillusionment with the NRA as well as the breakdown of the NRA and a new government plan to take the place of the NRA a lull and ebb in the strike movement and unionization has taken place.

8. This condition reflected the (1) broad mass pressure of the masses vs. the effects of the crisis and unemployment (2) the inability of the revolutionists and the class-conscious workers to gain the upper hand (3) the complete false policy and failure of the Socialists and Stalinists, the two most important organizations, to gain any semblance of leadership (4) the ability of the bosses, their government agents and the right wing leaders to handle the situation. Where the rank and file took the leadership out of the hands of the right wing a new progressive leadership with new tactics developed to meet the new situation - Toledo, Minneapolis, etc.,

9. This new development within the economic structure is laying the basis for a new type of trade union movement that is slowly maturing and taking form. With it there is an increase in the politicalization of the working class struggle.

The trade union policy necessary to cope with the present situation calls for the following strategical line which must be carefully concretized within each given situation:

1. We consider the trade union problems and its activity as one of the major tasks of the revolutionary Marxian Party.

2. Within the trade union field the most important task is the Organization of the Unorganized, into the A.F.L., where this is advantageous and interdependent industrial unions where this is necessary and an economic base is present. Above all we strive to organize the unorganized into industrial unions with a class struggle policy.

3. We do not pose the question of organizing the unorganized inside or outside of the A.F.L. This must be answered concretely in each given situation to the interest of the mass of workers involved.

4. The Revolutionary Marxian Party carries on activity within the reactionary unions, especially the A.F.L., these unions which dominate the organized section of the class. At the same time we do not consider unions outside of the A.F.L. which has a base and are not paper unions, as dual unions. Many unions have been forced to organize outside of the A.F.L. due to the false policies of the right wing leaders, job monopoly in the A.F.L. unions, racketeering unions, craft unions, with closed books, very high dues, etc.

5. Our task is to organize our own independent forces in each local, in each union, in each industry; that is, a Party fraction and a progressive group. Our fractions are subordinated to and controlled by the Party.

6. Trade union unity is not a catch phrase for us. We stand for trade union unity - for one union in the industry; and work for its fulfillment to the interest of the workers involved. The odium of split in the trade union movement must be laid on the door step of the right wingers and conservatives.

7. The tactics for unity depend upon the relation of forces and the concrete given situation; i.e., for united action, for amalgamation, for unification, for entry en bloc, or for the liquidation of the one union and its entry into the other union. Conditions satisfactory for the relation of forces must be advanced. Above all, unification through organizational guarantees for democratic rights, parity committees to prepare merger, no discrimination, etc.

8. We do not work within the A.F.L. to reform the leadership. We work in the reactionary unions to transform them, from craft unions into industrial unions, from unions with a policy of class collaboration into unions with a policy of class struggle, etc. We must oust the labor leaders of capitalism within our ranks. Such a policy may lead to expulsions and splits. Because of such we do not desert the reactionary unions or change our fundamental policy on the other hand.

9. There can be no compromise with the right wing leaders. To build the union, to win a strike, to fight the boss, means to fight the right wing and its policy. Any trade union leader who does not understand this cannot serve the interest of his class.

10. Where it is obligatory to be members of the Company Union, or where Company Unions dominate the plant, our members must work within and organize a Fraction, to fight for the workers' demands, to expose the company, to smash the

Company Union and lay the basis for a real union.

11. Functioning shop units and functioning shop committees are an essential element to all phases of our activity. We cannot rely upon the spontaneity of the workers. Without functioning shop committees and shop units, an effective struggle cannot be carried on. Shop units are not only organs of a functioning and established union. They are likewise means and instruments to organize the unorganized, etc.

13. Our forces must lead the struggle against Jim Crowism in the unions. No workers' democracy can be thought of where Jim Crowism exists. The struggle to organize the Negro workers along with the white workers in the unions is a major task of the present period.

14. The unemployed problem cannot be considered in the same light as it has been in the past. The trade unions must LEAD the struggle for the reduction of hours and for the DEMANDS OF THE UNEMPLOYED. Only the unity of the organized employed and the organized unemployed can carry on an effective struggle vs. monopoly capitalism. In each city, county, etc. the trade unions and the unemployed organizations must organize central bodies composed of delegates from both organizations as a centralized body, a coordinating and directing body for joint struggles in strikes and in unemployed struggles. Whenever members of the unemployed organizations obtain employment we must influence them to join the union of their industry.

15. We must at all times fight for the right of union members to belong to whatever workers' political organization they desire. Political "independence" of the trade union movement is a myth. Political "independence" of the A.F.L. means and conceals the right wing support to the two old capitalist parties. Ideological control, not mechanical control of the trade union movement by the revolutionary Marxists is a necessary condition for these organizations to function in the interest of the working class and its members.

16. A progressive group upon a concrete program of action, within the framework of this trade union policy, must be formed by our members within each local, trade or industry and on a national scale as a genuine non-partisan progressive trade union movement. Unification of the forces upon a common program vs. the right wing must be strived for.

17. Our forces must strive to unite upon a common platform for each union, the fractions of the other working class parties. If possible this should be organized into the progressive group or a progressive bloc. This depends upon agreement on a program of action for the given industry within the framework of our general trade union policy.

18. The new conditions confronting the working class and the new labor movement in the making, demand a new progressive national trade union movement and the creation of a progressive trade union educational and organizational center to unite the left wing activity within the A.F.L., with the activity of our fractions within the unions outside of the A.F. of L.

Hugo Cehler
March 1935.

Part One

THE UNEMPLOYED QUESTIONRECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND THE PROBLEM OF THE
RELATION OF THE UNEMPLOYED MOVEMENT TO THE
TRADE UNION MOVEMENT.

1. The fundamental question of the relation of the unemployment movement to organized employed workers - the trade union movement - has been raised. 1) the passage and impending execution of the 5 billion dollar Relief Program according to which 3½ million people will be taken off relief rolls and put to work on projects and 300,000 youths put into C.C.C. camps. 2.) the agreement between the A.F. of L. and the Workers Alliance of America covering organizations of workers on the projects.

A new situation is developing. The Workers Party as the revolutionary vanguard of the class must give a clear analysis of the situation, the relationship of forces and mark out a clear line of propaganda and act for the party and the NUL.

The whole development is a test of the Workers Party Unemployment program and the ability of the Party to meet new situations. Analysis shows that the Party's unemployment program is sound and not in need of revision of its main points. What is required are a speedy analysis and directives to apply it to the new situation.

The events following the inauguration of the four and a half billion dollar work relief projects fully confirms our analysis of last spring that this was the second big step (the NRA being the first) of the New Deal to beat down the standard of living of the American Working class. The four and a half billion dollar work relief project was directly aimed at the organized building trades division of the A.F. of L. which still has a high paper standard of wages and which, since the breaking up of the miners union constitutes the main proper of organized labor. The drive against the building trades standards would carry with it a defeat of the whole working class.

The General Johnson-Roosevelt defeat in New York City on the wage scale helped to slow down the tempo of the onslaught against the working class but by no means has it stopped the drive for reduction of wages. The half hearted fight by the building trades "militants" and the betrayals by Green and Company will have its effects in the near future. Up to the present the workers of the project jobs have not been knitted together in a unified force to fight back. The Stalinists and socialists policies in the unemployment field on this problem like the other questions confronting the class show their inability to carry this task to its logical conclusions. The Workers Party must adopt a clear position and take the initiative in this gigantic task. It should be placed on the agenda as one of the most important tasks confronting the party. It is both a trade union and unemployment problem. It is the direct connecting link between these two problems. It is up to the revolutionary Marxian party to give it political and class content.

2. Roosevelt's plan is: 1) as a relief scheme, a temporary make-shift; 2) in reality a wage-cutting scheme; disguised as a relief program it is part of the larger capitalist strategy of reducing the standards of living of the entire class to

enable the U.S. capitalism to compete more favorably in the world market. The whole plan revolves around a wage rate which is below the prevailing average rate for the most important trades affected - construction and through them at prevailing wagescales generally.

3. To defeat the plans of the capitalists and wring some benefit out of this gigantic work relief swindle the tens, the hundreds of thousands, the millions of workers involved in the projects will have to struggle militantly, on a clear program centering around the vital issues involved - the wage rate, right to organize and strike, etc. - and in united action with the trade unions.

4. The key to the problem from the side of the working class is militant, united action of the employed and unemployed, those on projects, those on relief rolls and those not even on rolls yet, to set up the machinery for this organization. If the employed and unemployed do not unite their struggles around the issue and the other issues involved and the five point program of the Party's unemployed program, the struggles of both will end in defeat.

5. The A.F. of L. will not even attempt a real solution of the problem. Its philosophy is class collaboration. Its craft union structure is not adapted to organizing the project workers, who, obviously, require an industrial union form of organization. The A.F. of L. bureaucracy is indifferent to the unemployed; refuses to lower high dues, initial fees, its expulsion of tens of thousands for non-payment of dues through unemployment.

The agreement reached with the Workers Alliance of America is aimed to prevent existing militant unemployed organizations from extending to the projects on a truly wide scale, to prevent the NUL from repeating its organization and struggle methods in Ohio, etc., on an even grander national scale.

6. The Socialist Party is playing Green's game, right wing and militants alike. This combination of forces represents a grave danger to a correct solution of the problem.

7. The initiative of working out a correct solution must come from the Workers Party and the NUL.

The program of action must revolve around (a) organization of the project workers and the workers on relief rolls and those not even on rolls into one organization (work relief section, home relief section, etc., higher dues from work relief members to defray organization expenses); (b) struggle, demonstrations for adequate relief, unemployment insurance; strikes for union rates, for increased wages to meet rising cost of living, against discrimination. (c) united action with the entire trade union movement A.F. of L. and independent - for organization and struggle. No exact form can be laid out in advance to be followed mechanically. The recent period has seen a number of forms worked out by the creativeness of the workers themselves - Minneapolis, M.C.C.W; Austin, Independent Union of All Workers; Toledo, Board of Strategy; Illinois, I.W.A.

Where collaboration with the A.F. of L. is secured organization relations should strive to include representatives of the unemployed organizations on local central labor councils, etc.

Where impossible to attain collaboration the NUL must independently organize project workers never ceasing to demand united action with the unions, supporting employed workers as in Toledo, Minneapolis, etc. In collaboration with the A.F.L. the unemployed organization (the NUL) must be careful not to jeopardize its militancy for without that it would decline. It must not make commitments which prevent it from acting on its present general line. In a word it must preserve its class struggle methods from the paralyzing and treacherous grip of the A.F. of L. bureaucracy. It must preserve its independence and autonomy to act outside of the sphere of agreement.

8. In the A.F. of L. the fight for collaboration with the unemployed organizations and organizational set-ups to realize it; for lower dues; against expulsions for non-payment of dues, can take on a new and greater significance. It can become a very important lever in the hands of the progressives against the bureaucracy.

The question of the relation of the unemployed to the trade union movement should be put on the agenda and efforts made there to commit the progressives to our unemployment program as a whole and for our program of action to meet the new situation.

9. Unity of the unemployed movement is the problem. The NUL must solve. Before we can unite we must discuss united action on the basis of a program of action.

1. The NUL should take the initiative again this year and call for a National Demonstration, similar to the October 24, 1934 demonstration. 2. At the same time efforts for unity with the W.A.A. should be approached with the aim of unification as rapidly as possible. The W.A.A. is in a critical position; being sabotaged by the S.P. leaders, by the A.F. of L., and with no material growth as expected at its foundation convention, all of which gives the NUL a key position in unification providing our representatives know what to give and what to take. 3. Upon this basis we can then proceed toward further unification with other forces, especially the NUC.

Part Two. RESOLUTION ON UNEMPLOYMENT

October 2, 1935.

1. The unemployment question is the key question of the present time in the United States to the development of class consciousness, or on the contrary, as the basis for a fascist movement. The separation of the workers from the system of production, the increasingly large numbers of declassed workers and petty-bourgeois, the question of the unemployed, brings home to these elements, their function and place in society, and

poses of necessity, before them, the broad social implications of their position.

2. The face of this solution; the working class solution, or its capitalist mask; the fascist solution, is increasingly, and of necessity must be accepted by larger masses of the unemployed, particularly now that the question of relief is again thrown on the localities and private charity, was well as the expressed hope of Roosevelt in "industrial recovery", a recovery which is nowhere on the horizon.

3. The recent statement of Roosevelt that if production were to return to normal only 80% of those then working could be employed now, and the fact that this figure could be greatly reduced, opens up to us the possibility of capitalizing on the inevitable social discontent which will follow this. The Coughlin and Share-the-Wealth movements should serve as a warning to us that we have underestimated the social and political consciousness of the American masses, their desire to follow the socialist slogans of a broad character, and what is more, the fact that the workers and petty-bourgeoisie are largely skipping the economic struggle and going to politics directly; in the present case the weakness and lack of clarity of the revolutionary forces giving the Coughlin and Long fakers, the Townsendites, the almost undisputed sway and use of socialist slogans plundered from Marxism.

4. The main struggle to organize the unemployed is the question of a perspective as a means to which the economic weapons seem logical. Without posing and emphasizing the relation of the broader social questions, to the unemployed worker, he will see himself, and does see himself, as an ingrate for demanding more money, to strike; as a mere flouting of authority, united action with trade unions; as a gratuitous expenditure of energy, made doubly so in the eyes of the unemployed worker by the traitorous action of the A.F. of L., more correctly, the fakers, but an onus which the inexperienced worker puts on the A.F. of L. as a whole without troubling to differentiate.

5. The radical groups in the main have gone in to the unemployed field with the ideas and methods of trade union struggle and organization; or, as the Stalinists in the previous, with adventurism, such as the slogan - "defend the Chinese Soviets". Needless to say, no large scale organizations have resulted from these methods, or when they were built, disintegrated. Los Angeles, Unemployment Councils, on a smaller scale, and the W.U.U. as well as organizations run by non-radicals. The NUL has had a good deal of success precisely because it was in the main militant and came out for the abolition of capitalism, but even here a decline is evident, and its great weakness is its concentration in rural areas, as well as the lack of concretization of the broad social questions.

6. In the future our attempts to organize the unemployed must take all these factors into consideration, not only as the exclusive property of the revolutionists, but as the slogans of the masses, to be used as the basis for organization and for the growth and stability of them. The masses will

not organize without a perspective being given them from the beginning, even posing before them in a broad way the necessity for a workers government to carry out our plans.

7. It should be clear from the foregoing that any organization which from the beginning does not pose for itself these tasks, has no value for the class, contrary to our attitude towards a trade union which has job control as its basis. An organization of unemployed not posing for itself from the beginning these broad tasks is merely dissipating the energy of those it manages to ensnare and can only drive the workers away from it in disgust and disillusion.

8. Only those organizations dominated by a leadership with a revolutionary perspective, and a correct program flowing from it, can play a progressive role, can answer the burning problems of such a movement, The C.P., the S.F. and other non-revolutionary groups, are forces which cannot play a progressive role in the unemployment movement, and being in the leadership of such, can only prepare it for capitulation to fascist demogogy in the absence of Revolutionary counter-propaganda, or rather a preventive injection of it.

(Note: Due to lack of space, it was found necessary to omit the resolution on Labor Defense work from this issue of the International News. - Ed.)