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HUNGER MARCH

by MICHAEL GOLD

Over 10 million Americans are out of work today, which means, with their dependents, that some 35 millions are living in misery, hunger and panic.

What are these people to do? The stale old lies of individualism break down in such a crisis. "Anyone who really wants a job, can always find it," is one of the vulgar taunts that used to be flung at the unfortunate. But 10 million men today really want a job, and where can they find it? Christian Science, New Thought, the Freudian adaptation to one's environment, the transcendental literary heroism of Emerson, Thoreau, H. L. Mencken, or the Pelman Institute, all the familiar ideology of capitalist self-help turns shabby and useless when 10 million men are out of jobs.

There simply is no individual solution to such a problem. And this is why the individual unemployed man sinks into such despair. He feels himself naked and alone in a battle against giant forces. The thought of suicide follows the unemployed man like a mangy yellow cur that cannot be driven away. Every daily newspaper is spotted with suicide tales. If there were honest statistics on such subjects in this country, it might be found that in the year 1931 more Americans died of hunger, worry and suicide than were killed in the Great War.

Suicide is the capitalistic method of solving unemployment. If there were utter Machievellian frankness among our rulers, they would openly advocate suicide among the jobless. When the helots grew too numerous for safety in Sparta, the upperclasses conducted periodical massacres in which the state was relieved of its "surplus" population. We are witnessing in the wave of contemporary suicides a similar slaughter of the helots. Surely around the gas-filled bedroom where another family of starved workers has destroyed itself there must sit an invisible audience of bankers, generals and politicians applauding the solution of another of their dangers. Yes, every workingclass suicide is a murder by capitalism, and is chalked down as such by the avenging angel of the proletariat.

The capitalist system is founded on the ignorance of the workers. It will endure only as long as these workers can be kept in their present state. The machinery of stupefaction, the ra-

dio, the press, the church, the political government, all are in the hands of the capitalist class, and work night and day to keep knowledge from the masses.

It was a serious crime, in the Czar's holy Russia, to teach an illiterate peasant to read and write. It is a crime in Fascist China, sometimes punishable by death, to write even the mildest poem or short story on a workingclass theme. It is a serious crime, in the United States, to teach the workingclass the A B C of organization, to teach it its own power.

For if the 10 million jobless men could be organized there would be no more hunger or suicide among them. Individually, they are less than nothing; as an organized mass they could be a power greater than all the battleships and police brassknuckles. Every capitalist knows this; and every capitalist fears it more than death, and stops at no brutality to prevent this organization.

Capitalism does not fear liberals and socialists, because it knows they do not practise the organization of class against class. Socialists are intensely interested in electing Norman Thomas or Morris Hillquit to Congress, but not in organizing the unemployed. The liberals are people with great hearts beating for humanity, and have lovely manners and speak grammatical prose. But they distrust class organization, too.

Only the Communists have a passion for organization, only they repeat again and again the magic word that will unlock the prison door of humanity, and set the masses free. And for this they are hated by capitalist, socialist, liberal.

Examine the bare facts. The crisis has lasted two years, and has grown progressively worse. It is not improving, it cannot improve for some time. Who has done anything to organize the jobless workers? Who has brought the problem out into the streets, and into the first pages of the newspapers but the Communists?

It is a familiar platitude that everyone agrees as to the ends of Communism, but disagrees as to the means. "Let us take Communism away from the Communists," was a perfect statement of this liberal instinct. The liberal dreams, like Stuart