

the policy chaos, the success of one program will determine the next few months of economic history: the U.S. Labor Party's proposal for a debt moratorium in defense of agriculture, industry, and public services.

PRESS BUILDS UP IMAGE OF LAZY WORKERS

Jan. 1 (IPS)--The reactionary press has begun a campaign to blame laid-off workers for machinery breakdowns, budget deficits, and even their own layoffs. Addressing this poison to the paranoid hysteria taking hold of the middle class, the Wall Street Journal and sundry lesser sheets across the country have been calculatedly depicting workers as "working less--but working harder at appearing to be working harder." Supposedly workers desire layoffs and then defraud the public when they suffer them.

Such propaganda is a foot-in-the-door for programs to force "the laggards" to work, similar to those used in Nazi Germany. Amidst a propaganda barrage about "traitorous lazy workers who sabotage the nation's economy," German workers who could not keep up with the killing production schedules were singled out by factory kapos for shipment to labor camps.

The Barrage

The Wall Street Journal last week had a front-page feature on "job insecurity" with quotes from a worker (discovered by an enterprising reporter somewhere in Pennsylvania) who feels his company "screwed him" by not laying him off! "And so," they write, "with widely varying degrees of concern, many American workers are greeting the prospect of extended layoffs." The article goes on to quote Professor David Sirota from the Wharton School of Management on workers throwing sand into the machine of another, "more productive" worker.

The myth of the shirking workmen was also put into circulation in various parts of the South. Old-line anti-communist columnist Victor Reisel recently produced a column in the Birmingham News which contrasts the collapse of industry to the growth of the "phony ID-card industry," proceeding to spin a tale of all sorts of ineligible loafers fraudulently obtaining unemployment and welfare benefits through forged papers. The fantasy-ridden Reisel appropriately refers to the proffered views of Nelson Rockefeller's own welfare cops in New York State, Robert Carlson and George Berlinger, who have publicly lied that their state could balance its budget if all the fraudulent benefits were returned.

The same pattern of myth-making was established in the Charlotte Observer, which featured a Christmas editorial by Professor M. Moore of the Georgia Institute of Technology. Moore scribbled out the enlightening claim that astronomical unemployment figures throughout the textile belt were actually "distorted," because most have lost their jobs due to their own "misbehavior."