

WORKERS' FORUM

Write to us—tell us what's going on in your part of the labor movement—what are the workers thinking about?—tell us what the bosses are up to—and the G-men and the local cops—and the Stalinists—send us that story the capitalist press didn't print and that story they buried or distorted—our pages are open to you. Letters must carry name and address, but indicate if you do not want your name printed.

RUSSIANS FIRST HINTED CHANGE OF C. P. LINE

EDITOR: I wish to call attention to an oversight in your article in the July 13 APPEAL on the tentative gropings of the Communist International toward a position of "critical" support of Anglo-American imperialism. The first indication of the changing line was not Amter's speech which you cited, but an article in the organ of the Russian Young Communist League, which appeared two days before Amter's speech. The Russian article was summarized by the New York Times (June 15) and printed in full by the Daily Worker which, realizing its importance, gave it a front-page splurge.

It purported to be a letter written by a French soldier from the front. The "letter" signaled the beginning of a switch to national defensism. "We sons of the French people must defend the fatherland," it said. "The difficult struggle must be carried on on two fronts—against those who betrayed the French people and are now planning disgraceful capitulation." It was only after he got this signal from the Kremlin that Amter made his speech claiming that Soviet occupation of the Baltic was "objective aid to France."

Paterson, N. J. P. S.

Our correspondent is right. It was an oversight on our part not to have noticed that the Moscow dispatch preceded the first hint of a new line in the DAILY WORKER. In general, it may be said that over long periods of time the Stalinist leadership in the United States and elsewhere knows as little about Moscow's intentions as any of us. The Kremlin bureaucracy prefers not to let its lackeys know its tentative plans; and the lackeys dare not ask. Only when the Kremlin has definitely embarked on a new course are the national "sections" notified.

Even then, they are not told everything which the Kremlin proposes to do along the new course. A comical example of this situation was provided during the first week or two after the Stalin-Hitler pact was announced. Browder and the DAILY WORKER were caught unawares. But of course they said it was fine. Then they swore that the pact would contain the "usual clause"; it did not. They said it "brought peace"; two days later came the war. They declared it would not involve a change of line; but within two weeks they were throwing the "Popular Front" line overboard. And so forth.

The Stalinist lackeys are thus in the awkward position of having to guess in advance what their master is up to, in order to be able to make the necessary shift more skillfully when it comes. At the same time they dare not move in advance of their master in the Kremlin. Hence the spectacle of the Stalinist press these days: aware of some new skulduggery being worked up in the Kremlin and therefore anxious to pave the way for a new turn; but at the same time repeating the old line and mixing it up with hints of the new.—EDITORS.

PRO-WAR TREND GROWING; WHAT CAN BE DONE?

EDITOR: A recent Fortune Magazine poll of American war sentiment concluded that more than two and a half times the number of Americans desire aid to the Allies, as compared with the number last winter. Other figures also show that American sentiment to aid the Allies is rising.

Our enemies, it is plain, are active in whipping up war sentiment—they crystallize opinion, spread propaganda in press, radio, etc., leading the people to think we have a stake in this war.

Albert Goldman's recent article in the APPEAL, on "How the Workers Can Fight Hitlerism", shows that "democratic" countries aren't any better in general than fascist countries. Goldman ends with: "The workers must begin the struggle against their own capitalism." But what concrete steps can we, the masses, take to combat capitalism and establish a Socialist United States for the workers' benefit?

There are many people in the same boat as I am, who agree with the 12 planks the Socialist Workers Party stands for. We aren't active in helping your party, for there is no breakdown into small, concrete units of the work we might do. By the time Goldman's education and organization of the American masses "for the kind of intervention that will really benefit the workers of this country as well as the workers throughout the world" (June 17 article) gets going, the War Lords will have sold the U. S. masses another war. We have a race against great odds. A small poor (in funds) minority group is tackling a well-oiled machine.

A. G. Bronx, New York.

It is all too true that the war mongers have tremendous resources at their disposal and that their propaganda instruments are far more powerful than anything that our revolutionary party can mobilize. But as powerful as the ruling class seems to be it is not at all unbeatable. What appears to be impossible now can easily occur within a comparatively short time. Remember that the Russian Czar looked very powerful several years, or even several months, before the revolution showed how weak the Czarist regime actually was.

There is no royal road to the socialist revolution. An individual who is anxious to solve the problems of the working class and agrees with our program is obligated to join our party and help us educate the working masses. There is no other method. To work within the trade unions and wherever there are workers, for the purpose of educating them to a realization of the true solution of their problems, and of getting them to struggle on all fronts is the only thing that can be effective at the present moment. In this period of reaction, it is difficult. The difficulties, however, do not scare any revolutionist.—EDITOR.

BOY SUICIDES CRIST TO HEARST'S MILL

EDITOR: Last August, Southern California learned of the suicide by hanging of a 14-year-old Mexican boy, Benjamin Moreno, inmate of Whittier State School for Boys.

Last Tuesday Edward Leiva 16, hanged himself with a bed sheet rope which he coiled through the ventilator screen in the ceiling of his cell.

Had this not been an election year, the tragic deaths of these two Mexican boys might have gone quite unnoticed. But Billie (the Rat) Hearst, on the alert for ammunition for smear campaigns against his political rivals in Sacramento, saw great possibilities in the boys' deaths.

The workers of Los Angeles know Hearst too well not to see through his fake humanitarianism. They also realize that 54 years of Republican administrations in California, which were supported by Hearst, did not create better conditions at Whittier and such places than has the present Democratic administration.

The real lesson of this tragedy is to smash any illusion about the Democratic administration and its predecessors. The workers must place the blame for this where it belongs, on the decaying capitalist system which, by giving rise to racial discrimination, first forced the two Mexican boys into a life of "crime", and then allowed politicians to so ruin its "institutions" that the inmates prefer to kill themselves.

Los Angeles, Calif. CARL BECKER

Jersey Okie Says Conditions Here Are As Bad As in the South

EDITOR: According to the newspaper, at the recent Congressional hearings in New York on the conditions of agricultural labor in the North, mayors, governors and businessmen united in saying that there was no problem in northern agricultural areas.

Well, I am one of the tens of thousands of agricultural workers who work on the truck farms of New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware who were not invited to testify. If I had been invited to testify I could tell a few things that would contradict the other testimony.

Thousands of workers come up from the South every Summer to

work in the fields. Many others, including myself, live in the big cities of the North. When Summer comes the relief authorities cut down on our relief to make sure that we will go to work on the farms.

I work on a farm that employs 1200 men, women, and children, near the town where I live. When I went to ask for work a few weeks ago, the foreman asked me how many was in my family that could work. I told him and then he asked if I didn't have another child. Though we are bad off, I don't want my youngest daughter, age eleven, to go into the fields. The foreman insisted that he was short-handed and if the

others in the family wanted work we would have to include the young girl.

So we were hired, and every morning at 5:30 a truck is sent to the neighborhood for us and about 25 others to bring us to the fields. Twelve or fourteen hours later we are brought home more dead than alive after having toiled bent over under the hot sun. Though the owner is a good Christian and goes to church every Sunday, he sees nothing wrong in having us work all day Sunday.

We are paid at the magnificent rate of 17-20 cents an hour (minimum wage laws as well as most other labor legislation do not apply to agriculture). Accidents and occupational diseases are more prevalent than in most factories but we lack the protection of workmen compensation laws.

S. J. A FIELD HAND

6-Hour Day Would Boost Steel Employment One-Third

By FARRELL DOBBS

The stubborn fact remains that 30,000 steel workers have already lost out in the industry and the jobs of thousands more are immediately threatened. Technological change is wreaking havoc among the steel workers. Decisive action by the Steel Workers Organizing Committee is demanded to find a solution.

Last April Phillip Murray, SWOC Chairman, outlined his program before the Monopoly Committee of Congress. He proposed that provisions be made through collective bargaining between the union and the corpora-

tions for six month's advance notice to workers who are to be displaced through technological change. During this period they would receive vocational training for other jobs. He further proposed that job compensation be paid where the new job, if found, is at a reduced rate of pay. A dismissal wage was advocated where a displaced worker is not reabsorbed in another job.

"This practical plan is not offered as the final solution . . ." Murray told the Monopoly Committee. " . . . Congressional regulation of the introduction of large technological changes is necessary." These regulations, he suggested, should make it compulsory for the corporations to pay a dismissal wage. The federal government would be required to provide for a vocational training program. Measures would be instituted to have industry immediately absorb the displaced workers.

Six month's advance notice and a dismissal wage would be a distinct improvement over the present situation. The steel worker today finds himself dismissed on short notice with little or no funds at his disposal. He is soon broke and becomes dependent upon a governmental relief allowance if and when he can get it.

MURRAY'S PROGRAM OFFERS NO SOLUTION

The dismissal wage would, however, not be a retirement fund. The corporation would fight to make it a very small sum. When it had been used up the unemployed steel worker would be right where he is now when discharged—broke and fighting to get relief.

Vocational training for other jobs would have little meaning. The trend is towards a reduction in available jobs. Technological change curtails the number of existing jobs far more than it creates any new jobs. The chances for employment outside the steel industry are equally slim. The latest CIO report on unemployment estimates that there are almost 11 million workers now looking for jobs. A few of the displaced steel workers would find employment under this arrangement, but it is no solution for the many.

The sliding scale of wages and hours is the fundamental approach to the problem of unemployment. The maximum hours of work should be reduced immediately to a point where jobs would be made available for all steel workers presently unemployed. Thereafter, the hours of work should again be reduced to compensate for any further curtailment of jobs because of new technological changes. The hourly rate of pay should be automatically increased whenever the hours of work are reduced so that the workers will suffer no loss in their total wages. The union should fight also for additional pay increases in order to raise the workers' standard of living.

Murray timidly touches this point, in his statement to the Monopoly Committee that the

maximum work week in the basic mass producing industries should be reduced to the level of approximately 30 hours a week at the prevailing earnings or more. However, Murray has resisted all proposals to fight for this objective.

The slogan of the 6 hour day at 8 hour's pay has been repeatedly discussed in the SWOC. If put into effect it would be a long stride towards a solution of the problem of unemployment in this industry. Almost one-third more jobs would be added.

There was a great deal of sentiment for this program among the delegates at the Chicago convention of the SWOC. The union administration side-stepped the issue by declaring it "impractical at the present time." They proposed instead a national unemployment conference of leaders of government, industry, labor and farm groups. In other words—no action.

It is not hard to understand how officialdom was able, at the SWOC convention, to veto any action. There were about 200 SWOC organizers present. All but a handful of them were there as delegates. Nearly a third of those participating in the convention were, therefore, hired hands of the administration. Experienced parliamentarians can easily maneuver as they choose with such a powerful bloc.

Nevertheless, the administration's victory over the union militants was a hollow one. The problem of existing unemployment and the certainty of additional loss of jobs in the steel industry remains very real. The fight for the 6 hour day at 8 hour's pay is still the first step toward a fundamental solution. The union officialdom has repeatedly told the workers that the industry must be more completely organized before there can be an effective struggle against the bosses. Such talk is idle. Something much more substantial is needed to convince the unorganized steel workers.

THE ONLY WAY TO WIN THE UNORGANIZED

The SWOC lost the 1937 strike in Little Steel by placing its reliance in treacherous employer-loyal politicians. Since then, the leadership has retreated constantly before the pressure of the steel bosses. The workers have been prevented from making a direct struggle against the corporations through trade union action. Instead, the leaders continue to rely upon the political "friends" and the "impartial" governmental boards.

Apathy and lack of confidence among the workers is only a natural result of this policy. They must be shown a fighting union. They must see that the SWOC means business; that it will energetically and intelligently apply its own strength in the fight with the corporations.

The launching of a serious fight for the 6 hour day at 8 hour's pay will win over the great majority of the steel workers to the support of the SWOC. Such support will in turn assure victory in the struggle.

New Jersey in the 1940 Elections

II. "THE GRAND OLD PARTY"

Unlike the dull Democratic primaries where only Hague candidates have a chance, Republican primaries are heated affairs which in recent years have shown the existence and nature of two important wings.

The "Clean Government group" took over the party in 1937 after denouncing the "Regular Republican" practice of collaborating with the Hague machine (and worse yet—sharing the spoils with it). The primaries last May showed they still had control when their candidate, Hendrickson, decisively defeated Hoffman for the nomination for Governor.

The primaries not only showed who was boss, but how little the groups differ in program. In control of the Legislature for several years, the party is responsible for what it has done and failed to do. But it was only about the spoils they argued, and about personal accusations, and about the charge that Hague secretly supported Hoffman, and not about —

THE G.O.P. RECORD ON RELIEF. Highlights of the Republican relief administration are:

Lower state appropriations each year since 1936; a steady increase in the municipalities' share in state relief costs which, because most municipalities are bankrupt, means a penny-pinching policy; and still lower standards for the jobs; investigating committees set up to convince the public that the less spent on relief and the more spent "to ferret out the chiselers", the better for everyone, including "the unfortunate people who really need relief"; instructions to municipalities to deny relief to strikers; orders that local administrators cease "recognizing" and dealing with union committees seeking relief for their members; the residence law denying relief to people in the state less than five years, which has resulted in many deportations, especially of colored workers back to the South.

In Congress U. S. Senator Barbour gave the party line on WPA by supporting the Roosevelt-Woodrum bill which cut wages, lengthened hours and abolished the union rate of pay, and by consistently voting for the lowest figure proposed every time WPA funds were being appropriated.

THE G.O.P. RECORD ON LABOR LEGISLATION. The number of progressive labor bills passed by the Republican Legislature is easily added up: there wasn't one. True, a state Wagner act, a state wage-hour law, anti-injunction bills, and acts regulating and taxing homework were introduced by Republican "friends of labor". But that was only so that some Republicans could have the basis for asking labor support for the party ticket. The fact is that none of them was passed—and for this the Republican party as a whole deserves the responsibility.

THE G.O.P. RECORD ON NEGRO LEGISLATION. What's good for labor is good for the colored people. That is, before elections, there are long speeches against Jim Crow. At elections one or two Negroes are put on the ticket to get out the colored vote. After elections a Negro legislator is permitted to introduce a few bills against discrimination. A few

thousand dollars are appropriated to investigate discrimination. Thus "the record is made" and they have something "to point to with pride". Then they bury the bill in committee, they stifle the investigating committee, they give a couple of colored men jobs as janitors, and let it go at that.

Another recent dispute shows that the inner G.O.P. arguments are not over policy:

During the primary fight the Regulars asked for support from the unemployed because the proposal to deprive relief clients of their right to vote had come from Colonel Glover, relief investigating committee director, and Essex Senator Zink, both leading Clean Government men.

Clean Government won the primaries—and the Regulars issued a statement promising them full support in the general elections! (Forgotten now is their explanation about what a vote for the Clean Government ticket means.)

After the primaries, Mudd, a Regular leader, announced his faction's proposal for the jobs: refuse relief to all able-bodied men who would not enlist in the Army.

In the uproar over this, Clean Government pretended great horror. But when they reorganized the state relief body shortly afterward, replacing Mudd as director with one of their own men, they appointed Mudd assistant director—at the same salary he had before!

Recently Barbour has attacked Cromwell as a war-monger, and by two resolutions he has introduced in Congress has sought to build himself up as "an advocate of peace". What do these resolutions say?

SJ Res. 286 amends the National Guard mobilization bill to permit exemption for dependency and other reasons similar to those in the proposed conscript bill. In other words, Barbour doesn't "quite" go along, he introduces a few miserable changes and seeks the anti-conscription vote without himself coming out against the conscription bill.

SJ Res. 287 limits to one year the period under which civil liberties and wage-hour restrictions may be suspended by the President under declaration of national emergency. Barbour is not against a dictatorship at home while soldiers die abroad "for democracy", but he wants it for only a year at a time. He is not against the M-Day laws, which permit the President to increase hours and cut wages, thus wiping out overnight the hard-fought gains of labor—but he is for them only a year at a time!

Behind this small change stuff, Barbour is as much for the war as Cromwell. He calls himself a "big Navy isolationist", that is, he thinks the Western Hemisphere is enough territory for Wall Street to get fat on at present. And so he has voted for every war appropriation and anti-labor bill passed this year. Once he has voted for the arms, how can he vote against conscription to provide men to use the arms? Once he has helped establish the war-size Army and Navy and the M-Day dictatorship, how can he tell the dictator how long to hold power? Obviously, Barbour's peace pose is a phoney bid for stray votes.

(A third article on the New Jersey elections will appear next week.)

From Union Defense Guards To Military Training

By CARL O'SHEA

Big Business, its professional army officers and its propagandists have for years inculcated the masses with the idea that it is far beyond a worker's ability to grasp the fine points of the military arts. Oh yes, the working man will do quite well as cannon fodder to be regimented to lay down his life in defense of the bankers and industrialists. But for large numbers of workers to be trained to command troops and ships and planes, to learn the uses of all offensive and defensive weapons, to understand military tactics and strategy—oh no! That must be left to the reactionary military caste, to West Point and Annapolis, to the businessmen and playboys and lawyers who receive special training by the government at Plattsburg and similar camps.

This arrangement, whereby Big Business and its flunkies are able to order the workers around during war, tell them how, when and where they must fight, and what to fight for, has worked out wonderfully for Big Business. But it has worked out tragically for the working class. And if the workers' unions are to survive the Second World War and to defeat fascism, either the native or foreign brand, organized labor must demand a decisive change in the direction of military training.

Away with the Plattsburg camps for the bosses. What we want and need are special government-financed training camps for workers UNDER CONTROL AND DIRECTION OF ORGANIZED LABOR, where instruction in all the military arts from the most competent military instructors obtainable is available.

Is this program practical? If a union can organize its own Defense Guard against fascist attacks—and some unions have already demonstrated the ease with which

Union Defense Guards can be established—then a union can certainly go one step further and organize military instruction for all its members.

When one well-known union set about to organize a Union Defense Guard, it found a superabundance of talent and material within the union ranks, of the sort that is found in practically every union in this nation. Within this union were scores of military veterans—ex-machine gunners, ex-cavalry officers, sergeants, a signal corps officer, a former German army officer who had fled the fascist terror. There were former tank men, pilots, even men owning planes.

With such a nucleus, this union found it feasible to organize and train hundreds of staunch unionists, to set up an Intelligence Department, etc. The members of the Defense Guard were more than willing to devote one, two and three nights a week to training which they knew was in their own benefit, under officers whom they could control and trust.

Confronted with the certain prospect of universal military training within a very short period, any sensible worker will much prefer such training under the direction of his union, rather than under the direction of the army and the Plattsburg-trained employers.

First of all, it is essential that the union membership must understand the need of acquiring military knowledge, not in the bosses' way, not for the defense of the interests of American imperialism, but in the union way, for the defense of the workers' homes and lives and jobs against enemies at home and abroad.

Once this need is grasped, the rest follows. Organized labor must demand of the government that it place at the disposal of the unions nothing less than the finest military equipment and instruction available. The government must pro-

vide training camps for the unions where union members can undergo military instruction, the government to stand the expense and the employers to continue paying the trainees their regular wages while they receive such training.

Organized labor must demand access to all forms of arms which the government must place at the disposal of the union—machine guns, field and coast artillery, cavalry and tank and anti-tank equipment, naval vessels, the materials of chemical warfare, equipment for engineers and signal corps, not to speak of armories and drill grounds.

With the new simplified manual of arms now in use, and the greatly simplified method of handling troops in formation, any diligent union could quickly train its members in these elements of military work. Until the equipment from the government is forthcoming, the union could train in much the same sort of way American troops were trained in 1917 and 1918, with dummy equipment.

In that period, often there would be just a few rifles, machine guns and larger pieces of ordinance available for several thousand men. These pieces were taken down and assembled before the trainees, their uses and operations explained. The men were taken in groups and taught how to handle the arms.

It is within the scope of thousands of local unions to make an investment in such arms.

For years the Ordnance Department of the U.S. Army has sold huge quantities of condemned and obsolete equipment to groups of American Legionnaires and other private organizations. There is not the slightest reason why the trade unions should not be able to acquire this military equipment at the same low cost.

If the comparatively weak Reserve Officers

Association can make such demands upon the War Department (upon terms, to be sure, that prevent the masses from having any voice or control in military training), certainly organized labor can demand that the War Department make available to the unions such equipment, material, supplies and instructors as are required for training purposes.

Even if maximum aid is not obtained from the War Department, the union movement can still make tremendous strides in organizing the military training of its members.

In such a nation of game hunters as the United States, there is no obstacle at all in obtaining the simpler forms of arms. It is the rare worker who does not own at least one gun.

Within the union movement in every city there are today scores of unionists with pilot licenses, some of whom own their own planes. The nucleus of an air corps could easily be formed from such trained union members.

Once the program were under way, actual military maneuvers could be practiced, involving scouting, communications and signal work, aerial photography, map work, coordination of the various units, in short, all the staff work that confronts an army command under wartime conditions. Union movements in adjacent cities might cooperate in the conduct of such maneuvers. Various units within the union could begin to specialize in the study of certain branches of military art.

Organized labor in the United States must learn the lessons that have brought such a tragic fate to the workers of Europe. Not the Burke-Wadsworth bill, not the blind alley of pacifism, but MILITARY TRAINING UNDER TRADE UNION CONTROL. Here is a program worthy of the best in the labor movement.