

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.

We warmly appreciate the many letters we have received on the death of Trotsky. We welcome all letters and will publish them during the forthcoming weeks as soon as space permits—Editors.

Letter from A Class War Prisoner

As the years went by the number of victims of Stalin's GPU mounted. Some were merely shot out of hand in the dark dungeons of his prisons. Others met the same fate after a show of "legality", and still others were just murdered by his gang of agents throughout the world. There remained Trotsky, the one man the Kremlin tycoon feared above all else. Attempts were made again and again on the life of him. They all failed.

Now, finally, the bloody hands of the GPU have reached their victim and stilled forever the voice and the pen of Trotsky. Stalin has finally crowned his career with this foul murder. Indeed his pact with Hitler is now "cemented in blood."

I am in prison. I am subject to rules and regulations. I cannot say or write as I please. Hence I cannot express myself adequately on anything. I can only state my hopes that some day a way will be found to unite the revolutionary movement throughout the world. When that day comes Stalin, and all that which he represents, his gang of mercenary killers, his machine of ruthless repression, it will all be swept away. Let us hearken to the voices of his countless victims calling from the dismal dungeons of the living dead: let us remember those whose voice he stilled by murder, and let us strive for the day of unity.

Fraternally yours,
JOHN G. SODERBERG
Sing Sing Prison
Ossining, N. Y.

Dear Comrades,
I hardly know how to start this letter, as this is the saddest day in all my life, the death of our comrade and brother Leon Trotsky. Stalin's GPU will not stop at Trotsky's death but will keep on the trail of every revolutionary fighter there is under the sun. The black hand of the GPU hangs over the heads of every Trotskyite, but with 15 years of schooling under the teaching of comrade Trotsky we will know how to take care of ourselves and build the revolutionary movement, and bring Socialism to power.

Comradely,
JOHN BOULDS
Aug. 22nd, 1940.
Pleantywood, Mont.

To NATALIA TROTSKY:
We, the pressers of Local 60, International Ladies Garment Workers Union, grieve with you at the brutal murder of your beloved Leon Trotsky by Stalin's GPU agents. We mourn the loss of a great man, a great workers' leader, a man who inspired the hearts of downtrodden and exploited men and women throughout the world. Although we did not see eye to eye with Trotsky on many questions, we were always conscious of his genius, honesty and working class sincerity. May his great spirit and monumental work be a source of consolation to you, Mrs. Trotsky, in the moment of your great sorrow. We know only too well that when the name of the murderer of the Kremlin will be forgotten, Trotsky's name will be revered and honored.

MEMBERS OF DRESS PRESSERS' UNION
LOCAL 60, I.L.G.W.U.
New York, N. Y.
(Sent by the group of workers who were in the union hall when the news of Trotsky's death came)

MPLS. UNIONS DEMAND MILITARY TRAINING CONTROLLED BY WORKERS

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn.—A demand for military training under the control of the trade unions is the working class answer to the Burke-Wadsworth bill that is given by The Northwest Organizer, official organ of the Minneapolis Teamsters Joint Council (central body of ten teamsters' locals).

The demand, voiced in a big front-page editorial in the teamsters' weekly of August 22, denounces the Maloney amendment as no better than the Burke-Wadsworth bill, and declares its irreconcilable hostility to "corraling the workers into the regular army, where they will be treated like cattle by the military clique and by the Plattsburg-trained employers and lawyers. These officers have no more regard for the lives of the workers in the army than in the factory."

"If Big Business insists that the masses be taught the military arts, we propose that the trade union movement be given control of the military training of the workers."

Entitled "Some Plain Words on Conscription", the text of the Northwest Organizer editorial on military training reads as follows:

The American Federation of Labor, the Congress of Industrial Organizations, the independent railroad brotherhoods, the Farmers' Union and many unemployed organizations have united in opposing the Burke-Wadsworth bill which would compel workers to join the army. With few exceptions, the toilers of this nation have indicated their opposition to compulsory military conscription under a war machine dominated by anti-labor interests.

If we understand labor's objection to the Burke-Wadsworth bill—and we believe we understand it very clearly—it is based on several considerations.

Military Training Not The Issue

It is not the idea of military training itself that is objectionable to labor. No worker would be opposed to understanding the furthest reaches of the military art.

It is partly the idea of taking this training under the heel of a notoriously anti-democratic and anti-union military clique that labor objects to.

Millions of toilers further sense that the war for which they will be trained to fight will be a war that is definitely NOT in their interests, a war that is not fought for any higher ideal than that of profiting Big Business and the munition makers.

Further, every worker of draft age has an active dislike of being forced in the army to work for \$30 a month, leaving his family to the not-at-all-tender mercies of the relief authorities.

Beware Pacifist Illusions!

It might be pleasant to assure our readers that with Washington confronting the solid opposition of organized labor, the unemployed and a large section of the farmers, there is little chance that Congress will pass the Burke-Wadsworth bill.

But this is a time for plain speaking, and we cannot allow our readers to harbor any illusions.

Despite the mass opposition to the Burke-Wadsworth bill, it must be clear to all but a handful of pacifist blockheads that some sort of compulsory military training is going to be insisted upon by Big Business. To protect and extend their profits and their foreign markets, the financial and industrial rulers of the United States are demanding and will obtain from a servile Congress compulsory conscription. Because industry is preparing for military aggression in the near future on a world scale.

Big Business needs compulsory military training, if not to implement a policy of immediate intervention in the present war in Europe, to aid their plans to organize the Western Hemisphere under the domination of Wall Street and to advance their interests in the Far East.

We have scant sympathy for either the pacifist opposition or the Congressional opposition to the Burke-Wadsworth bill.

The opposition in Congress revolves around the Maloney amendment which proposes that voluntary enlistment be tried until January 1, 1941; if enough volunteers fail to appear, Maloney and his friends are quite prepared to plunk for compulsory enlistment.

If ever there was a swindle, this is it. We fail

to see any measurable difference between the Maloney amendment and the Burke-Wadsworth bill. Both would place the workers and the youth under the heel of the reactionary military clique. Whether you get recruits by compulsion or by a high-pressured propaganda campaign is a secondary matter.

The pacifist opposition to conscription is even more contemptible. Your run-of-the-mill pacifist is a featherbrain who will accept all the horrors of capitalism except this final and greatest horror of all: imperialist war. Then your pacifist balks. He hesitates to take the final step. At the last moment he usually endorses the war, telling his deluded followers the war represents some holy cause, some high-sounding and fake ideal.

Pacifism is a bankrupt philosophy in our modern world. Any union man who has ever been through a strike can tell you this. There isn't a union that could last one year if it adopted a pacifist attitude towards the finks and thugs and strike-breakers sent against it by the employers. Your typical pacifist is always hyper-critical of the use of force by a union in defense of the lives and living standards of its members; he is willing to look the other way while the employers organize their force against the workers.

Fortunately pacifism has almost no followers in the United States today, a very good augur for the realism and the future of the American people. Too many people recall how the pacifist crowd in the First World War turned yellow and sold out their followers to the "War for Democracy" waged under President Woodrow Wilson.

Labor's Answer To Conscription

What answer CAN organized labor give to the insistence of Big Business that the manpower of this nation be conscripted for the war machine?

Pacifism is no answer. The Maloney amendment is a meaningless and cynical gesture.

A frank recognition of the truth reveals that at present organized labor is neither strongly enough organized nor of a mind to abolish or stop the war machine. But American labor IS well-enough organized to protect the interests of the worker in the army, just as we protect the workers in their jobs.

We oppose corraling the workers into the regular army, where they will be treated like cattle by the military clique and by the Plattsburg-trained employers and lawyers. These officers have no more regard for the lives of the workers in the army than in the factory.

If Big Business insists that the masses be taught the military arts, we propose that the trade union movement be given control of the military training of the workers.

We want to see union men trained in the military arts, 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. We want to see the workers trained in the military arts under their own union officials, whom they can control and trust, at government expense.

We believe that just as the unions serve to protect the workers in peaceful times, so they cannot shirk the responsibility of aiming to protect their members in times of war.

Some of our readers may believe it is their patriotic duty to join the army and fight when and where and for whatever they are told to fight for. Others may believe that the war will not be in the interests of the common people. Some of us may oppose, others applaud, the Burke-Wadsworth bill. All such differences can be discussed within the trade union movement.

But as union men in the brotherhood of labor we can certainly all agree that it is infinitely better for our own unions to control military training, at government expense, than it is to place ourselves at the mercy of the reactionary army staff.

Confronted with the certain prospect of universal compulsory military training within a very short period, any sensible worker will much prefer to take such training under the direction of his own union.

SELLING THE APPEAL

Outside, the building is draped in black and red. Banners stretch across the front and side, reading, "We mourn the loss of our comrade and leader, Leon Trotsky." The whole points for the populace a damning finger at the Stalinists' national headquarters, half a block away. Inside, preparations are in progress for the Memorial Mass Meeting; another issue of the Appeal is under way; and grimly, and solemnly, the work of the party goes forward.

A deeper thanks than we can express was earned by the branches which chose last week to pay heavily on their accounts. It, in the face of events this extraordinarily good work went unhalting, it did succeed in making the paper virtually self-supporting for the week. In the crucial hours these payments released a large sum previously earmarked for the Appeal subsidy, helping toward expenses in Coyoacan, San Francisco, Boston, Detroit, Flint—every one of the many dollars sent in counted for ten—in our hands when most needed.

The letters received in this office day after day reflected the feeling throughout the party: CLEVELAND, Aug. 21—Caught in the middle of a business letter, this literature agent writes—"I hardly have the strength to finish this letter. My father has just barged into my room with the paper with the headline telling of this latest attack on Leon Trotsky—this time with an ax. Is this the beginning of a terrible Hell breaking loose

on our movement? Strength comrades! We'll meet all the Hell they can give us. We must work to the last ounce of our strength. A great man is now perhaps dying for us—let us lesser men not be afraid to die. We must weld our ranks into the sharpest and strongest of axes, to cut down the filthy brush that blocks mankind from the path of progress! Let us hope that not yet—not yet!—will Trotsky pass away into the ranks of our deathless martyrs. Their ranks are full enough; we want him alive—and with us who still breathe life! If he dies it will be one more light passing away from us, leaving our too dark sphere of earth still darker. It will take years and decades of striking-the-flint in our movement to produce another..."

BOSTON, Aug. 22—"The news of the Old Man's death was a terrific blow to all the comrades here... Every comrade was in the same state of mind and couldn't talk... But we must go forward, as the Old Man said, 'Over our bleaching bones the truth will conquer!'"

HUTCHINSON, Kansas, Aug. 24—"The fever of apprehension, the sickening feeling that the bottom has dropped out of everything and the rebellion against the fact that the Old Man is gone—well, it's been tough going. Just that short message which the National Office sent us concerning contemplated arrangements for the memorial helped a lot. It bolstered the feeling that each and every

Trotsky's Body Cremated, U. S. Refused Entry

(Continued from Page 1)
capitalist class would permit under no circumstances.

The Mexico City press estimates as between 60,000 and 100,000 to be the number of those who came to pay their last respects to Trotsky, last Wednesday night and Thursday, filing by the casket during the period the body was lying in state.

Mexican custom provides a moving gesture of honoring the dead—taking turns in standing guard at the casket. "Peasants, workers, women of the people, bearing credentials (of organizations) or spontaneously gathered yesterday at the funeral agency where the casket was, in order to stand guard before the coffin," reports LA PRENSA of Mexico City.

(A full account of the funeral in Mexico City, which followed on Thursday, will appear in next week's APPEAL. One account of the funeral, a dispatch from Mexico to THE DAY, appears on page 3 of this issue: "Trotsky's Last March".)

one of us must—and will—work ten times harder than in the past for the victory for the Fourth International."

The determination of the party was best evidenced in the special orders for the memorial edition of the Appeal. 20,000 papers reached the public during the week, with New York and Boston in the lead. The current issue will probably reach an equal number of workers, from early indications in branch letters. This time the torch seems to be passing to the Middle West and the West Coast.

What Methods Shall The Union Follow In Steel?

By FARRELL DOBBS

There is general agreement among the officers and members of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee that a vigorous organization-drive is needed. The big question is, how shall it be conducted? Many in the ranks contend that an immediate fight for the 6 hour day at 8 hour's pay is necessary to show the unorganized steel workers that the SWOC means business. The leaders say, on the other hand, that the union can't effectively fight for this demand until it is more completely organized.

The leadership understands, nevertheless, that it must show some fight if the union is to make any gains whatever. This is evidenced by the official campaign just launched with considerable fanfare against the Bethlehem Steel Corporation.

The announcement last week by Bethlehem Steel Corporation that it was raising wages to a 62.5 cents hour minimum is an encouraging sign that a vigorous union campaign would soon push this company into line. Undoubtedly the corporation made this announcement to offset the union drive launched just previously.

The announced objectives in this drive are: (1) Recognition of the right to organize; (2) The \$5 daily minimum wage; (3) Guarantee of basic hourly rates; (4) Bonus system reform; (5) Elimination of staggered work week; (6) Elimination of the so-called "learner's rate"; (7) A written, signed contract.

To win these demands would mean to bring considerable gains to the Bethlehem workers. It should be noted, however, that the program is very vague as to the objectives regarding hours of work. It is, in essence, a move calculated to bring this openly anti-union company up to the approximate level of conditions in those steel concerns where the SWOC has greater strength.

PROGRAM DOESN'T SOLVE WORKERS' MAIN PROBLEMS

It does not represent a step towards direct trade union action to force a solution of the grave problems of unemployment and threatened loss in earnings which are confronting the steel workers. The union leaders are still hoping against hope that a way can be found to avoid an open fight with the corporation. They look to the government to give them a substitute for trade union action.

Forty-six local lodges introduced resolutions at the SWOC convention proposing to fight for the 6 hour day at 8 hour's pay. The officials answered that they were pressing for a broad national program to solve the problem of technological unemployment. They did not mean a broad national

trade union program. Their proposal is for a national conference of leaders of government, industry, labor and farm groups.

The workers would be glad to find a solution to their pressing problems without being forced into strike action. Strikes are not a pleasant thing. However, the steel workers will fight if necessary, and fight hard. The question is, what price peace? They are not for peace at any price.

The SWOC leadership has abandoned to all practical intents and purposes any idea of strike struggle since the defeat in Little Steel. Strike action has been used since that time in few cases; then only for very limited purposes and gingerly handled. The National Labor Relations Board has become the white hope of the union. Reliance on the government to the almost complete exclusion of trade union action has been the official policy for the past three years. The results of this program are not very impressive.

The union has contracts with the United States Steel corporation and quite a number of small companies. The national leadership is very cautious about creating strained relations with any of these companies. They are uneasy about the possible outcome. Grievances are pressed by the union membership and the local lodge leaders, but the national officers frequently put on the brakes.

There are no contracts with the Little Steel corporations. Existing governmental legislation principally the Walsh-Healey Act, is used by the SWOC as the base in these companies for minimum conditions as to wages and hours. The union does not have direct recognition by these corporations,

but relies instead upon the Wagner Act to maintain the best possible semblance of collective bargaining. These are union grievance committees in these plants which are given some de facto recognition by the management. They get what they can by negotiations, and in some cases, if the company agrees, by arbitration. The workers are told by the union leaders that the NLRB is their big stick.

This, in general, is not a very impressive state of affairs. Despite these shortcomings the SWOC has made gains for its members. The union has saved the jobs of many workers and it can be said that the presence of the SWOC in the industry has resulted in some benefits for every steel worker, whether or not he is a member of the union. Nevertheless, the situation of the steel workers is not good.

Technological change continues to take its toll among them. The revolution in production methods in steel is creating an entirely new set of problems for the steel worker. Three years of experience have already shown that neither the National Labor Relations Board nor general unemployment conferences can be relied upon to meet the needs of the day.

The steel workers must depend upon their own organized strength as the primary weapon in their struggle against the corporations. They must be well organized to win this fight. The SWOC must conduct a campaign to bring the unorganized workers into the union ranks. Abstract arguments won't do this job. It is necessary to show them a union in action. Three years of dependence upon substitutes for trade union action is enough and more than enough.

BOOKS and PAMPHLETS

By LEON TROTSKY

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General Motors Speed-Up Is "Patriotism"

FLINT, Mich.—The General Motors Corporation, taking its cue from the conservative tone of the St. Louis convention of the UAW-CIO, has begun a speed-up campaign in the name of "patriotism" which, however, threatens to blow the lid off the seething discontent in the plants.

In the Buick division in Flint, usually the slowest-paced in General Motors, a relentless stepping-up of the production lines is resulting in stormy plant and department meetings, angry demands for action from the rank and file; meanwhile the UAW leadership is trying its best to placate and quiet the membership, but above all doing nothing to bring matters to a head.

Foremen rush up and down the lines, under orders from higher-ups driving the men: "Put it up a few notches men... show your patriotism!" It is easily imagined how "patriotic" the workers feel whose last ounce of energy is sweated out over the machines, while the billionaire corporation owners in auto refuse government orders until they are assured sufficiently juicy profits.

New Speedup Trick
In the AC Spark Plug plant here, the Corporation is using a singularly effective means of achieving a break-neck speed-up. Several hundred new men have been hired in the last three weeks. These are not hired from among the unemployed former auto workers. They are hired through a local high school, which cooperates in placing its young graduates, 18 and 19 years old, in jobs.

These youngsters, with no experience in a plant, with no knowledge of unionism, and to whom any kind of job is a godsend, are easy marks for the company speed-up artists.

Many Accidents Result
The moment these high school kids hit the belt line they are given to understand that if they don't get out production they will be fired summarily. They work their heads off... every day the line goes faster, nerves are strung taut, arms ache, backs are breaking. Under this strain, inexperienced workers are especially open to slips, accidents and mangling by the maze of machines.
This week a youngster, just

hired in at the AC plant, had been working under such a strain. His machine stalled. He clambered up on top of it in an effort to repair it... to keep the line going... to get out production. His coordination was none too good, and he slipped. His youthful body dropped into a tub of cyanide.

The first thought on his mind was not his own danger, but his job. The first he had had for years. He climbed out of the cyanide, his body burning, and walked, a living corpse to the first aid, crying out "Will this mean I lose my job?—It wasn't my fault. Will I lose my job?" In a few minutes he died.

In addition to this suicidal speed-up, the young high school kids are put to work at the lowest GM wage, 65 cents an hour, no matter what work they are doing.

"Trouble Brewing"

One young worker, in telling his experiences under the speed-up said, "You can see trouble brewing... you can see it on the faces of the men, you can sense it in the air. One of these days there is going to be a regular epidemic

of sit-downs."

This campaign to force double-time work out of the auto workers is only the beginning, a taste of what is coming. Wartime production has not yet begun in auto. They are only making preliminary tests.

And the UAW Leaders?

What will the UAW leadership do to meet this attempt to break down the working standards? Every day pressure on the union tops is increased... both from the side of the bosses, and from the rank and file. The bosses want them to assure that they will countenance no strikes, will allow production step-ups for "national defense." The workers want action, settling of the grievances, a fight against the corporation. Will these leaders, the Reuthers and the Frankensteins listen to the workers, whom they are supposed to represent, or the bosses into whose hands they are playing by their do-nothing policy?

The auto workers are learning their first lessons. They will soon have to search for new leadership, for militants, who are not fooled and bought out by the national

defense blarney, and by government jobs and appointments.

It has been announced that the AC Spark Plug plant will in all probability manufacture hundreds of thousands of machine guns, that Buick is already busy on "educational orders" for tanks. Other plants also will begin to work full blast on war goods.

In the speed-up that ensues, trouble will inevitably break out in Flint. When it does it will have to be "in spite" of the UAW leaders, and will of necessity bring to the front a new set of leaders.

Demands Are Clear

These new leaders will demand an abolition of the speed-up, and the employment of unemployed auto workers if an increase in production is needed. They will demand strict observation of seniority, which is now being ignored in many plants; they will fight for the 30 hour week at 40 hours pay, for strict classification of jobs and pay; for more efficient safety devices; and, in a word, for a policy of struggle to defend the working conditions and living standards of the auto workers.