

# 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—tell us 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.

## Tenement Children Forced to Sacrifice For War

Editor: Just how long are the capitalists and their tool organizations going to be allowed to keep on robbing the poor to pay the rich? Yesterday's Daily News carried the following item: "About 130 tenement children will eat meat loaf instead of turkey at an 11 A. M. Thanksgiving party, so that the difference in cost may be sent to help children in England. The plan was announced yesterday by officials of the Children's Aid Society's Jones Memorial Center at 407 E. 73rd St., where the party will be held."

No doubt one forfeited turkey in the house of Rockefeller, Du Pont, or Roosevelt—which would never be felt,—would more than cover the amount to be raised. But no—the great sacrifice to help British children (and the rich ones, at that!) must be made by tenement children, who are being deprived of their only opportunity all year long for such a delicacy. . . . and justice for all." Indeed! M. W. New York City

## Stalinist Manager Fired For Excusing Absentees

The working of the new Stalinist labor code is illustrated by a story which the Associated Press got past the Moscow censorship recently.

V. Redroff, former manager of the Kuleff saw mill on Lake Balkal, wrote to the Communist Party organ, *Pravda*, complaining that he had been unfairly dismissed from his position by the district committee of the Communist Party. The mill being far from the collective farm market, he explained, he had organized expeditions of the workers to go fishing in their "spare time" and bring the catch back to the restaurant at the mill. Forty of these amateur fishermen were caught in a storm, and eleven carried far out from shore tossed about for two days before being rescued by a cutter. Redroff generously excused them for their absence from work.

However the district committee of the Communist Party ruled that the "storm has nothing to do with the case. The men missed work. The manager acted as their protector and should be expelled from the party." Redroff was dismissed and tried on charges of protecting tardy workers and disorganizing work. The story reached the press only because the bureaucracy wished to purge the district committee and to show its "benignity." But that such an incident could occur at all is sufficient commentary on the arbitrary character of the Stalinist rule and the degree of its separation from the workers.

## Minneapolis Sunday Forum Analyzes Workers' Vote

Workers believed the Democratic party was their party in the last election, Ted Dostal, St. Paul organizer of the Socialist Workers party, told a Sunday Forum audience in Minneapolis November 14. Because they associated gains they had made themselves with the Roosevelt administration, the workers supported the Democratic candidate, he said. Workers believe that Roosevelt is the symbol of reformism. Trusting falsely in his domestic policies, they did not vote for his foreign policy or the war to which he is leading the United States. Against Hitler and for the preservation of social gains at home, workers are willing even to submit to conscription; because "they feel a rearmament program really will keep them out of war and maintain social gains."

"The primary problem of American capitalism today is that American imperialism must expand in every direction," Dostal said. The contradictions which capitalism has created are such that "only socialism will solve the problems of the world," the speaker stated, and closed with a call for military training under worker's control and an organized labor party.

## Marxist School Finishes Successful Term in N. Y.

NEW YORK—The Marxist School has just finished a very successful semester both from the point of view of the calibre of the lectures and the large attendance at the classes. At least 175 workers attended the school with a goodly portion of them attending all of the courses. William F. Ward's course on "Dialectical Materialism" was the best attended with a registration of 101. There was such a large demand for a continuation of this course, as well as of "Trade Union Leadership" by Farrell Dobbs that these instructors were prevailed upon to give three additional lectures. All those who want to register for these lectures may do so at once either at the office of the school at 116 University Place or at Irving Plaza, 15th and Irving Place where the lectures are being held every Monday evening.

William F. Ward is continuing his course from 7:30 to 8:40 and Farrell Dobbs follows from 8:50 to 10:20. The registration fee is 50c. for the three lectures or 25c. per session. Many of those who have taken Murray Weiss' excellent course on "Elements of Marxism" have already registered for the additional lectures of William F. Ward, who in the coming sessions will give special attention to the dialectical method used by Marx in creating his great economic work "Capital." It is very heartening to report that many who have attended the Marxist School have shown that they have imbibed the teachings of the great masters of Marxism, for they have applied for membership in the Socialist Workers Party and are now ready to partake actively in the battle for socialism.

## Hitler Offers People Socialism and Dog Meat

November 14 was a big day for Adolph Hitler and a significant one for the German working class. Three things happened. In Berlin, the Fuehrer decorated 85 "soldiers of labor" for their loyal cooperation behind the lines in furthering the conduct of the war. All of them, including 40 women, were armaments workers. Hitler disclosed the purpose of the little bribe of medals in his accompanying speech which exhorted the workers to display greater unity and determination to bring a quick victory for German arms. Things have got to a state, however, where medals alone seem an insufficient reward. Therefore on the same day a decree was issued and a promise made. Dog meat was legalized as an item of human food for the workers of Greater Germany if they can wait until January 1, 1941 for the delicacy. This supplements horse meat which has been available for some time. And the "schooner Adolph" did his third deed for the day when he promised behind the lines workers that Germany's main duty—after the war, though—was to serve as a "model socialist state." They get dog-meat; they are promised socialism. As long as workers anywhere wait for those up above to give them things, that is the way it will be—dog meat in the pot, socialism in the future.

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# Militarism and Workers Rights

By JAMES P. CANNON

Our resolution on military policy proclaims no new principle, but attempts to apply the old principles of Bolshevism to the new conditions. In line with all the programmatic documents of the Fourth International, the resolution says: "The imperialist war is not our war and the militarism of the capitalist state is not our militarism . . . We are against the war as a whole just as we are against the rule of the class that conducts it, and never under any circumstances vote to give them any confidence in their conduct of the war or preparations for it—not a war, not a cent, not a gun with our support. Our war is the war of the working class against the capitalist order." (*Socialist Appeal*, October 5).



JAMES P. CANNON

So much for the principled position of Trotskyism, which alone among all the tendencies in the international labor movement remains consistently revolutionary in times of war as well as in times of peace. But, despite our opposition, we have the militarism and tomorrow we will have the war in full scope. That does not change our principle, but it imposes upon us a certain line of tactics since we do not want to remain aloof as mere oppositionists. We do not rest content with general opposition to capitalism and general advocacy of the socialist revolution and simply repeat our ultimate aims as a set of soul-saving formulas. We seek in each and every situation to devise the tactical slogans around which we may carry on continuous and effective agitation leading toward the goal. The problem of the hour is to find a realistic basis for our irrevocable class agitation in the arena of war and militarism which now, and for a whole epoch, will dominate the world. This is the aim of our resolution on military policy.

### A PROGRAM OF AGITATION

Our military program is intended as a program of agitation. In order to be effective such a program must take into account not only the objective circumstances (the epoch of militarism), but also the present consciousness and mood of the workers. The American workers are against war, they are fearful of war, yet they are convinced in their bones that it is unavoidable and that the millions of young men who are being drafted and sent up for military training are destined to be cannon-fodder. A comrade writes from Buffalo: "A large section of the working class, and perhaps all of it subconsciously, regards the draft for what it is—going to war. Even the National Guardsmen who left town last month were accompanied by weeping mothers and sweethearts." The workers like to hear the promises of Roosevelt and Willie that American boys will not be sent into foreign wars, but the great mass of them do not believe a word of it. Neither do they believe the isolationist and pacifist liars who say it is possible, under capitalism, to "Keep America out of war."

### HATE AND FEAR FASCISM

The workers are profoundly impressed by the fate of the European countries which have been overrun by Hitler's army. They hate and fear fascism. So far they see it incarnated only in the foreign foe, and they are ready if necessary to go to war against it, especially if the war is presented to them, as it surely will be, in the guise of "defense" against a "foreign" attack. Facing the prospect of war it is obvious to the serious-minded workers that military training is needed. That is why they submitted universally to conscription; without enthusiasm, it is true, but also without any serious opposition. This attitude of the rank and file of the American working class is a thousand times more practical and realistic than that of the pacifist middle-heads who proclaim the necessity of socialism and yet oppose compulsory military training—in a world gone mad with militarism.

Our military resolution takes the foregoing circumstances, objective and subjective, as its point of departure and attempts to show the workers how to carry on their daily struggle against the bosses over into the new field of militarism.

### NEW UNION MEMBERS

The American workers have made great advances in the last six years. Millions of new recruits have been drawn into the trade union movement for the first time. They have had to fight every inch of the way to gain the smallest concessions, and then to fight all over again, and continuously, to keep them. In the course of these fights the workers have developed a fervent devotion to their unions. They have learned to hate and distrust the bosses who directly exploit them and the police and local authorities who help the bosses. In strike after strike the militant American workers have demonstrated that they have no fear

of direct clashes with these local authorities and police. But in their overwhelming majority, the workers still think of the national government as something different. They respect it and at the same time they fear it as a remote power which cannot be combated. The average militant trade unionist, who considers a battle with local cops as a part of the day's business in a strike, is inclined to flinch away from any conflict with "the man with the whiskers," the popular name for the federal government and its police agents.

### MILLIONS OF WORKERS

In the army of conscription the situation will be radically changed. It will consist of millions of young workers—the proletariat in arms! They are accustomed to certain rights. Their mighty numbers will confer a sense of power upon them. It will not be possible to treat them like cattle for any length of time without creating a profound discontent in their ranks. Our military transitional program is not for a day, but for tomorrow, for a long time. If only a part of the militant workers take interest in it and regard it as a good thing if it could be accomplished—that is already a gratifying initial success. It is up to us then to convince these workers that our demands are reasonable and practical in the present situation, and fully within their rights, as indeed they are.

### A WORKERS' QUESTION

Our aim, it must always be remembered, is not to convince quibbling factional opponents who wage a fictitious political struggle in the form of literary exercises, but workers who take the question, as they take all questions, seriously. That is why we hinge our agitation around illustrations from the life they know, that of the factory and the union. Their class attitude in the factory is the product of their experience, aided by the agitation of the more conscious elements. The right of the workers to organization, to have union officers of their own choosing, to be represented by shop committees of their own trusted people—these precious and necessary rights were not conferred upon our workers by benevolent bosses or an impartial government. In fact, they also were once "illegal," and more than one worker has been "shot" for advocating them. The workers' conviction that they need these things in the factory, in order to set limits to oppression and exploitation, is the result of their experience.

### UNEXPLORED TERRITORY

Their scepticism regarding the possibility of realizing analogous conditions in the field of militarism arises from the fact that for them it is as yet unexplored territory. But they will soon discover that the oppression, exploitation and class discrimination, which are the substance of their daily lives as workers, reappear also in the prussianized militarism of the capitalist state in a form that is more intensive, more brutal and more contemptuous of human life. The military experience of the workers will come powerfully to the aid of our program, giving it a burning actuality and making it the banner of their strat struggles for a minimum of class independence and self protection. Our program anticipates this experience and attempts to prepare the minds of the workers for a speedier and more conscious reaction to it.

### METHOD OF CONFUSION

Shachtman, writing in *Labor Action* (November 4) employed a different method of attack, a method designed not to clarify, but to confuse. At the beginning of his article, as the first "point" which sets the tone and shapes the character of his article as a whole, he "lifts" my above-quoted statement out of its context and tries to make it appear that I am arguing not against the prejudices of the workers but against the principles of the modern Trotskyist movement! Then, with mock seriousness, he asks: "Of which old policy is our military program an extension?"—and solemnly pretends that I may have been speaking of the policy of the "Liberals, social-democrats and Stalinists." Then, after explaining to us that "Trotsky above all taught the movement that the workers themselves must take charge of this fight against Hitler," he ends his first "point" and premise of his article with the devastating question: "If that was the 'whole principle of the new policy' what was the principle of the 'old policy'?"

But I had explained in the sentences he quoted, and can only repeat here again, that we are not enunciating any different principle but simply attempting to apply "old principles to new conditions." But Shachtman, obviously calculates that by the time he

gets to the end of his juggled and misapplied quotation the casual and unsuspecting reader will be too muddled and confused to know the difference. To answer him it is only necessary to go back and show what we really said and what we really meant. The interested reader, who takes the trouble to read the quotations in their context—and that is an absolutely necessary precaution whenever Shachtman is "quoting"—can get the matter straight. He will also get an insight into the polemical methods of Shachtman which became so notorious in the factional struggle which he conducted jointly with Burnham against Trotsky and the majority of our party. He became known to the adult members of our movement as an unscrupulous "twister" of quotations and a perverter of historical incidents to serve factional intentions.

TRUE TO FORM In his lengthy attack on the military policy adopted by our

# TRADE UNION NOTES

by Farrell Dobbs

ATLANTIC CITY—The recent AFL-proclaimed "spirit of victory" over the CIO has expired in the womb. After a spirited discussion on the second day of the CIO convention, the industrial union workers gave Frey, Hutchinson, Woll and their mouthpiece, Green, a clearcut answer: *No capitulation to craft unionism! Forward to a ten-million-membered CIO!* Throughout the sessions this theme was echoed by the delegates. The Atlantic City gathering voted to launch a large-scale CIO organization drive, with Ford, Bethlehem and aircraft at the top of the list.

### VULTEE SHOWS WHAT IS COMING

Meantime, events in the Vultee strike were giving a clear indication of the forces of reaction gathering to oppose the CIO in this drive. Charges of "treason" have been leveled against the Vultee strikers. Congressmen, administration officials and the boss press have launched a many-sided attack on the union. The Dies Committee has announced that it will investigate the strike. This announcement provoked a public statement by Attorney General Jackson that the FBI has already investigated and found that the Vultee strike was started and prolonged by "communists."

Headlines in the boss press are beginning to brand all strikes as impediment, if not outright sabotage, of "national defense." Comment is being introduced in the press through the Gallup poll and by other means to imply that public opinion is in favor of drastically curbing the unions. From various quarters demands are already arising for compulsory arbitration of labor disputes involving "defense" production. The appointment of Doctor Miller's signals a sharp turn to the right by the NLRB. The increased participation of military officials in the mediation of labor disputes foreshadows an added use of the military boot against striking workers.

### GREEN AND HILLMAN'S JUDAS ROLE

The AFL leadership will, no doubt, attempt new incursions into CIO territory in the mass production industries. Striving for ultra-respectability, the craft unionists will play a miserable role in this effort. As in the past, they will frequently furnish a pretext for the corporations and their government stooges, to represent struggles for wages and conditions as jurisdictional fights between unions. They will give some support to certain forms of anti-labor legislation and anti-labor White House policies when directed mainly against the CIO. In their eager desire to weaken the CIO, the craft unionists will forget that by these actions they are also feeding on their own flesh.

Sidney Hillman, whose speech at Atlantic City reached a new low in grovelling before the powers that be and playing on every chord of reaction among the workers, will prove to be more of a detriment than a benefit to the CIO. Hillman made it clear in his convention address that *above everything else* he is out to help build the war machine.

### THE ROLE OF MURRAY AND JOHN L. LEWIS

Phillip Murray, the new CIO national president, has indicated ability to resist outright capitulation to craft unionism under government pressure. He also appears capable of going a certain distance in an organization drive in the face of the growing pressure from the bosses and their government. However, it is no accident that he placed the strongest emphasis on a demand for mere "defense commissions," one for each industry, in his remarks at the convention. Murray is a "labor statesman." He is not a

party, Shachtman runs true to form from beginning to end. The dubious methods which he employed in his premise are maintained throughout the article. Misrepresentation is followed by falsification and reinforced with a spice of outright literary forgery. In debating with Shachtman one needs not a pen but a pair of hip boots and a shovel in order to dig down and clear away the filth which he piles over the essence of every dispute. It is not a very agreeable task but in the line of duty I shall return to it again, insofar as the exposure of these methods of the political underworld helps to facilitate the explanation and clarification of our military transitional program to workers who are seriously and honestly interested in the question—the most important and burning question affecting their lives. (Editors note: This is the second of a series of articles by Comrade Cannon. The third will appear next week.)

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Come to the Old Time Beer Party for the Time of Your Life Saturday, Dec. 7th 8:30 P. M. VICTORIA HALL Irving Plaza Irving Place and 15th Street Polkas - Waltzes - Jazz - Entertainment Admission 49c Auspices: N. Y. Local, S.W.P.