

# 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.

## A Laborer On the New Army Camps Tells His Story

Texas has the tradition of doing things the big way. Right now it is following out this tradition in the construction of training camps whose scope, gigantic size and enormous cost are staggering to the imagination.

At Ellington Field, Palacios, Corpus Christi, Galveston, Hitchcock and other places the working people are building their own future concentration camps. This expression is not a personal one. It is in daily use at the fields among the common laborers who plod ankle, knee and even, sometimes, hip deep in the rich, black Texas ooze. It is an expression that characterizes not a deep pride in the product of their handiwork, but a shame, a hatred, and a rebelliousness.

Most of the jobs are union, of course. The existing craft building trades unions are totally un-equipped to handle the demand for labor. Consequently, a great "organizing drive" on the part of the AFL is in progress. The method used is the "You-wanna-work-well-sign-up-here-four-dollars-please" system. The newcomers are not encouraged to become real union men in any sense of the word. In spite of this it is significant to note that the attitude of the average common laborer is "The union stinks but... (and here the speaker usually glares) ... don't you forget that it's MY union, guy!" In short, while the methods of the bureaucrats acting as labor contractors for, almost partners of, the hated contractors, completely antagonizes and outrages the oppressed workers, these same workers will not for one moment forget that the union still stands between them and the bosses, and that without it their wages would be even lower than they are. A "button-man" is a proud man, and the envy of his neighbors. The few seeds being planted in this field will one day bring rich harvests, you can be sure.

The common laborers hate their checkers, they hate their foremen, they hate their supervisors, and their hatred is particular for the contractor. But most of all they hate army shavetails and officers in civvies who even today prattle about the grounds with a "tomorrow I'm gonna gitcha and really make you work you sunnab!" expression in their eyes.

And by the way, don't let the kept press fool you about bigtime proletarian patriotism. The nearest approach to it is a hopeless acceptance of the inevitable, but a rebellious acceptance none the less. Its most distant pole is the desire of some of the workers I have heard to install polecat nests under the officers' quarters. I say "polecat" deliberately. Use your imagination.

Working conditions for us are terrific. Even button-men with the

contractor's badge frequently have to wait from five or six A. M. to noon or later for the chance to work. Usually when the word "No more work!" spreads there are still some hundreds outside the gates, yearning for the chance. They stand gazing out over the camps, a hungry look in their eyes. And behind those hungry eyes smoulders hatred... and rebellion. One day it will no longer smoulder.

And if one is so fortunate as to get on... unpredictable hours, compulsory toadying in hope of tomorrow's work, flagrant scapegoating for the blunders of foremen, checkers and supervisors who know less than the men under their control and are paid three times their wages for... doing nothing. "Is there anything more useless than a foreman?" we ask? The answer is "Yes; two foremen." And of course, mud, mud, mud. And with it, rheumatism among a majority of those who float from camp to camp, aching, creaking joints, running noses, watery eyes... of safety precautions there are none. No time to fool with that. Uncle Sam needs these rat traps in a hurry... and the contractors there for water, plain old water, is dodged as much as possible. Waterboys walk atop the freight cars to stay out of sight. And sanitary facilities? Describe 'em yourself, Editor. You can't exaggerate! Phew!

These are the training camps, Editor. The men are not in them yet, but as they rise from the muck of Texas it is already clear to those that have eyes to see that those who ordered them are building not instruments for their own preservation, but instruments which will one day precipitate a gigantic explosion... an explosion that will wipe them from the face of America and, we hope, from the world. This is my belief. Of course, I am only a

**COMMON LABORER**  
Brother "Hod-Carrier", Int'l Hod Carriers, Building and Common Laborers Union, A.F.L.

### BANQUET

For  
**GRACE CARLSON**  
The Trotskyist Candidate for U.S. Senator from Minnesota. Her Vote Exceeded the Combined Votes Cast for the Socialist and Communist Parties.

**Saturday Feb. 1**  
GERMANIA HALL 8:00 p.m.  
160 Third Ave. Near 14th St.  
New York City

**AUSPICES:**  
Socialist Workers Party  
Admission \$1

# Navy Backs Union-Busting Bill To Militarize Merchant Marine

## Would Compel All Seamen to Work Ships For Coolie Wages

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Backed by high-ranking officers of the United States Navy, Representative Everett M. Dirksen, introduced a bill in Congress this week to "make all crews on American merchant ships members of the active Naval Reserve." He said the intention of the bill is to "militarize commercial shipping in event of a national emergency" and "to break the Communist grip on the American merchant marine."

Dirksen's bill is merely the culmination of a long smear campaign against American seamen begun by the Dies Committee and drummed up by a series of red-baiting articles against maritime workers by William McFee in the *Saturday Evening Post*.

One of the real reasons behind the move is revealed in figures released by the Navy Department, simultaneously with the announcement of the Dirksen Bill. The Navy had set itself a goal of enrolling 30,000 merchant seamen in the Naval Reserve during the past four years, but only 339 such volunteers have actually been enrolled in this period.

Major George Fielding Elliot, military and naval expert, estimates in his authoritative "The Ramparts We Watch" that at least 20,000 reservists of trained caliber will be necessary to man the key posts alone in a merchant marine controlled by the Navy under emergency regulations.

In reality, the stand of the men who make up the crews of the merchant ships can be clearly understood by a comparison between their present conditions of work and those in the Naval Reserve. After years of hard struggles in organizing strong unions of maritime workers, the seamen have established hiring through the union hall and collective bargaining on the vast majority of commercial vessels. In the Naval Reserve collective bargaining is banned. Wages have been raised by the unions to a tolerable point; in the Naval Reserve the scab standards persist. On union ships overtime pay is religiously adhered to; in the Naval Reserve there is no ceiling to hours.

Here is a comparison between average monthly union wage scales and the Naval Reserve scale:

Rating	Union Scale	Reserve
A.B. Seaman	\$72—\$95	\$54
Ord. Seaman	55—70	21
Firemen	72—95	60
Oilers, Water-tenders	82—95	72—84
Cooks	95—150	72—84

The reaction of the unions—the

## SCHEDULE OF CARLSON TOUR

Fri.	Jan. 17	Rochester
Sat.	Jan. 18	Syracuse
Sun.	Jan. 19	Boston
Mon.	Jan. 20	"
Tues.	Jan. 21	"
Wed.	Jan. 22	New Haven
Thurs.	Jan. 23	New York to Feb 1
Sun.	Feb. 2	Newark
Mon.	Feb. 3	New York
Tues.	Feb. 4	Trenton
Wed.	Feb. 5	"
Thurs.	Feb. 6	Allentown
Fri.	Feb. 7	Reading
Sat.	Feb. 8	Quakertown
Sun.	Feb. 9	Philadelphia
Mon.	Feb. 10	"
Tues.	Feb. 11	"
Wed.	Feb. 12	Baltimore
Thurs.	Feb. 13	"
Fri.	Feb. 14	Pittsburgh
Sat.	Feb. 15	"
Sun.	Feb. 16	Indianapolis
Mon.	Feb. 17	Indianapolis
Tues.	Feb. 18	"
Wed.	Feb. 19	St. Louis
Thurs.	Feb. 20	"
Fri.	Feb. 21	Memphis
Sat.	Feb. 22	"
Sun.	Feb. 23	Arkansas
Mon.	Feb. 24	Arkansas
Tues.	Feb. 25	Texas
Wed.	Feb. 26	Texas
Thurs.	Feb. 27	"
to Thurs.	Mar. 13	"
Fri.	March 14	Los Angeles
Sat.	March 15	and vicinity
Sun.	March 16	"
Mon.	March 17	"
Tues.	March 18	"
Wed.	March 19	"
Thurs.	March 20	"
Fri.	March 21	"
Sat.	March 22	San Francisco
Sun.	March 23	"
Mon.	March 24	"
Tues.	March 25	"
Wed.	March 26	"
Thurs.	March 27	"
Fri.	March 28	"
Sat.	March 29	"
Sun.	March 30	Portland
Mon.	March 31	"
Tues.	April 1	Seattle
Wed.	April 2	"
Thurs.	April 3	"
Fri.	April 4	Plentywood
Sat.	April 5	Williston
Sund.	April 6	"
Mon.	April 7	Fargo
Tues.	April 8	"
Wed.	April 9	Twin Cities

and the M.E.B.A. (CIO) among the engineers—has been unanimous in its opposition against this attempt to drag down the seamen into the Naval Reserve.

Behind the legislative move there is, however, a far deeper aim. In the book already quoted, Major Elliot says:

"It is necessary to say quite plainly that a very bad state of discipline exists in our merchant marine. This is not ALTOGETHER due to union activities... If war came, it would be necessary to dispense with many of the men now serving in our merchant ships..."

Although couched in cautious language, this expresses the innermost thought of the brass hats; it is necessary to get rid of the unions and of the most militant union fighters in the merchant marine, Major Elliot believes that this can be done by building up the Naval Reserve with men who would be given "assurance against

National Maritime Union (CIO) as well as the Seafarers International Union and the Sailors Union of the Pacific (AFL), the independent West Coast Marine Firemen among the unlicensed personnel, as well as the United Licensed Officers among the mates

## The Record of the War Labor Board of 1918

By MICHAEL CORT III

Immediately upon its inception in February 1918 the National War Labor Board enunciated "A Declaration of Principles." The best way to analyze the Board's work is to quote the principles and then show how they were applied.

Principle No. 1.—"There shall be no strikes or lockouts." There were plenty of lockouts during the war period but the Board only took cognizance of the strikes. There is no record of the Board ever having disciplined a boss for locking out his men. There are plenty of cases where the Board cracked down on the workers for striking.

The first step taken in this direction was the enactment of a rule that provided that once workers in any plant had struck, their case was "outlaw" and could not be heard before the Board. Thereupon, all agencies of the government would mobilize bourgeois public opinion against the workers; if this failed to break the strike, troops were used. If the workers struck after the Board had made a decision, then the case was turned over to the executive branch of the government and the workers involved were barred from all war time employment, which meant 90% of American industry.

The workers at the New Jersey plant of the Wesson Oil Company revolted in the summer of 1918 against working conditions that the Board had failed to correct, and went out on strike. The Board declared the case "outlaw" and handed the case over to President Wilson. The President threatened, not only to bar the workers from "any war time industry throughout the country," but also threatened to send them into the front line trenches. AFL President Gompers joined in the threat.

### The National Run-Around

Principle No. 2.—"Labor has the right to organize and bargain collectively." The workers in the New England plant of the Madison-Kipp Lubricator Company in 1918 were working 12 hours per day on piece work. However fast they worked, their piece work earnings were always computed in such a manner as to keep their wages at a fraction over 28 cents per hour. Upon announcement by the NWLB that employees were guaranteed the right to collective bargaining, the workers organized and demanded their rights. The boss not only refused to lower hours and raise wages, but he completely refused to bargain collectively. Immediately an appeal was filed with the Board.

After some months a traveling-examiner showed up to hear the case. Conditions were so bad that the examiner was forced to find for the workers, but the boss ignored his decision. Faced with an unyielding boss, the workers appealed the case to the Board itself. After several more months the Board affirmed the right of the workers to bargain collectively, instructed them to again elect a shop committee, and again wait upon the boss for a discussion of their grievances. The boss was admonished to meet with the committee this time. The boss refused to meet the workers this time too, and they again appealed to the Board. Before the Board got around to consider their appeal, the war ended and the Board was dissolved.

226 Board decisions were concerned with the right of collective bargaining and the majority of the case histories parallel the one just cited.

Principle No. 3. "Where union and non-union men and women work side by side the continuance of such conditions shall not be deemed a grievance." This prohibited the closed shop and thereby robbed the workers of the backbone of any genuine collective bargaining system.

### Perpetuating Coolie Wages

Principle No. 4. "In fixing wages, hours, and conditions of labor, regard should always be had for conditions prevailing in localities affected." Through this paragraph the Board justified wage differences between the South and the North, between the organized and the unorganized workers. The Board was dedicated to the status quo, not to reform.

There arose, however, considerable demand for the formulation of a minimum wage scale.

their use as strike-breakers in time of peace." What he means is, it is obvious, actually using Naval Reserve men as strike-breakers in time of emergency, toward which end the whole scheme is hatched.

In order to ward off impending attacks, the maritime unions will have to take a hand in establishing collective bargaining and the union wage scales in the merchant marine Naval Reserve, if they do not want the latter to be used for the purpose of wrecking the conditions and wages gained by the unions up to now and for destroying the unions themselves.

To the union busting program of the shipowners and their bosom friends the Admirals, the seamen's unions must counterpose a labor program of their own for the men in the Naval Reserve.

Subscribe to the "Fourth International"

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# Highlights In The Labor Press

By CARL O'SHEA

Commenting on the substance of national defense, the *Minneapolis Labor Review*, January 3rd, says: "It was unfortunate, we believe, that in his address the President spoke against strikes and lockouts, but did not insist that not only would war profits be regulated, but that there would be no war profits. No war profits from the munitions and equipment of war sold to Britain and no profits to industrial owners from the work of preparing this nation for defense. This would become a sweeter land to 80,000,000 people if instead of all this talk, from those who do no manual labor, about increasing hours of toil, there would be a large scale move to shorten the hours without decrease in pay, and put to work the 8,000,000 or more who vainly seek employment."

The *Weekly People* reports (January 4) that its presidential candidate (Aiken of the Socialist-Labor Party) in 1940 received 14,861 votes in fourteen states, compared with 12,777 votes in sixteen states in 1936.

The *American Newspaper Guild Reporter* announces that four resident organizers will be added to the organizing staff of the International. The Guild strike in Monroe, La., was finally ended with a Labor Board stipulation that returns 13 of the 16 strikers to their jobs, with back pay not to exceed \$11,000. The January 1 issue of the *Reporter* contains several articles pro and con relative to the merits of the Youngstown resolution condemning communism, upon which a referendum is to be held.

We hope the Guildsmen will have sense enough to defeat this red-baiting resolution.

The *Canadian Labor Herald* for December comments on the AFL convention: "This month the AFL held its 60th annual potlatch at New Orleans and re-elected William Green for his seventeenth term as president with a salary

increase from \$12,000 to \$20,000 per annum. Of course Mr. Green needed that extra dough. These are strenuous times we are living in and it would never do for members of trade unions to neglect their leaders to the point where (like the unemployed) they begin to show the obvious effects of malnutrition. Labour leaders must be kept in prime condition. It takes a lot of nerve to denounce a strike of workers who have gone out in the middle of the night on picket-line duty to win a 6 per cent increase in wages, and in the same week the denouncer grabs off \$8,000 more per year."

Justice, organ of the ILGWU, January 1, reports that President David Dubinsky has pledged \$100,000 of union funds to a Dress Industry Promotion Fund to which the retailers and dress industry will of course also contribute. The next thing you know, Dubinsky will be spending his spare time hawking dresses on the streets.

The *San Francisco Labor Clarion* for December 27 reports that on December 19 the locked-out Gantner & Mattern knitgood workers were tendered a holiday banquet by the labor movement. The union particularly thanks "the officers and members of Teamsters' Union No. 85 who have, at a great cost to themselves, refused to pass our picket line."

The *Duluth Labor World* in December published the complete list of local signers of petitions to place the Communist Party on the ballot in Minnesota.

This is the first union paper so far as we know, which has gone in for this dirty bosses game.

From Washington comes news that the AFL has chartered its 106th international union: the Wine, Liquor & Distillery Workers International. Representatives of locals composed chiefly of wholesale liquor salesmen won 7 of the 9 offices.

## CIRCULATION GOING UP!!

Last April, when the petty-bourgeois splitters had done their worst, the party absorbed decisively the resultant decrease in Appeal circulation. At that juncture the N.O. had the courage to plan a program of expansion that would run the circulation up a full 75%. It was realized, and for weeks we walked around in a daze—dreaming of a complete doubling of the April circulation. That was realized. We stopped dreaming and just walked around in a daze.

After a while we caught on that the Dialectic had become involved, and regained our poise. We now announce as a matter of course that the APPEAL press-run is now 150% more than it was last April, with another 10% increase scheduled two weeks hence. What's more, we have no doubt that the Dialectic will remain on our side (Though we know if we asked William F. Warde he'd say it will and it won't.)

## NEW YORK TO THE FORE

Nearly half of the most recent increase is due to the efforts of proletarian New York. The New York branches, which formerly hid their individual laxness behind a seemingly impressive city-wide total, are today demanding their place in the sun for their steady expansion of mass APPEAL work. Starting with last week's issue, the APPEAL order of the New York proletarians was increased by 40%—(which is also, as they proudly state, 40% more than the total NATIONAL circulation of the paper now being issued by the petty-bourgeois splitters.)

This increase means that now the average New York branch is doing at least as well as the most active branches elsewhere in the party, barring Minneapolis and Chicago. And they caution us that this latest increase by no means exhausts local New York's possibilities. We've seen these Young Big City workers in action, and we know they mean business! In weeks to come we hope to publish reports of their excellent activity with the APPEAL.

DETROIT DOUBLES ITS APPEAL EFFORTS  
DETROIT—... Beginning with February 1st issue we expect to increase our bundle order by 100%!

"We feel that the proposed changes in the APPEAL are further steps in the transformation of our paper into a mass paper and will do much toward making our party a mass party." The expansion of APPEAL work in Detroit to Minneapolis proportions—following on the heels of similar recent expansion by Chicago—is the surest sign we can think of, of the rapid transformation of our party into a mass party. (Get the snow out of your shoes Minneapolis! This Detroit expansion is no accident: Your leadership is being seriously challenged by the up and coming comrades in Auto!)

## LOS ANGELES REPORTS

LOS ANGELES—... In several places, our APPEAL work is beginning to bear fruit. At the waterfront, San Pedro, many workers stop to talk to us. We cover meetings of the Vultee Aircraft local of the U.A.W.A. and receive excellent response. Ours is the only labor paper being distributed at these points...

"The comrade from Flint, Michigan, wrote an excellent letter in the December 28th APPEAL. As he pointed out, mass APPEAL work, regularly, will open the way to thousands of eager workers."

## NEWSSTAND SALES: ATTENTION AGENTS!

Please send to this office a complete list of the newsstands in your city which carry the APPEAL, so that it may be published in the February 1st issue, in a national newsstand listing. Be sure to send it with your next remittance, so that your city may not be omitted.

## Bronx House Party

DANCE \* DRINK \* DINE  
LATEST RECORDINGS  
Swing Classical  
241 E. 169th St. Apt. D12, Bx.  
January 18, — 8:30 P.M.  
Admission 35c, including food

Directions: 6th & 8th Avenue subway to 167th Street station

## TROTSKY MEMORIAL FUND

Branch	Quota	Amount paid	%
BOSTON	\$ 100.00	\$ 150.00	150
NEW HAVEN	20.00	26.00	130
LOS ANGELES	150.00	162.45	108
QUAKERTOWN	7.00	7.50	107
BUFFALO	25.00	26.15	105
DETROIT	200.00	210.00	105
PORTLAND	10.00	10.50	105
TOLEDO	50.00	51.00	102
Minneapolis & St. Paul	1000.00	1001.00	100.1
Chicago & Indiana Harbor	200.00	200.07	100
Pittsburgh	10.00	10.00	100
Allentown	15.00	15.00	100
Milwaukee	5.10	5.10	100
Reading	5.00	5.00	100
Baltimore	10.00	10.00	100
San Diego	8.50	8.50	100
Rockville	7.00	7.00	100
Texas	5.00	5.00	100
Newark	150.00	150.00	100
Hutchinson	10.00	10.00	100
St. Louis	5.00	5.00	100
Akron	10.00	10.00	100
Philadelphia	30.00	30.00	100
Rochester	15.00	15.00	100
San Francisco	100.00	100.00	100
Williston	10.00	10.00	100
Flint	150.00	138.00	92
Lynn	100.00	90.00	90
New York	1000.00	706.00	71
Cleveland	70.00	10.00	14
Youngstown	50.00	6.00	12
Individual Contributions		3.30	
TOTAL	\$3527.60	\$3193.67	91%