

# Bureaucracy in the R. R. Brotherhoods

This is the second of a series of articles on the conditions of the Railroad workers. The first appeared in the Militant of January 16, 1931. Further articles will appear in subsequent issues.—Ed.

In our first and previous article on the Railroad Brotherhoods, we pointed out that the railroad workers in this country were kept divided into twenty-one separate craft organizations by swarms of overpaid craft officials who kept themselves in control of the unions in typical bureaucratic fashion. In the articles to follow we will take up more in detail the results which naturally flow from such an arrangement and point out to the railroad workers, and workers in general, that under present industrial conditions the craft form of organization is not only useless but extremely expensive to its members.

At the conclusion of this series of articles we will submit a few recommendations which, we hope at least, will furnish some material for a program, around which to organize that growing minority in the railroad unions who believe that Labor Unions were instituted for an entirely different purpose than to merely furnish a fat meek ticket for a lot of unnecessary officials.

**The Brotherhood Bureaucracy**  
The Labor bureaucrat and the craft union are closely related and both of them are products of the times through which we have been passing, namely, the era of capitalist expansion and development. Workers can only learn through experience and the railroad workers are no exception to this rule. The experience which the railroad workers have had up

to the present time has not been able to produce anything but a craft system honeycombed with overpaid officials.

For the past seventy years, a period through which all of the present twenty-one railroad unions were developed, railroad transportation has gone through an almost unbroken era of expansion. Through this period of railroad development the workers, although always poor, were generally kept busy. They worked seven days a week as a general rule and also overtime. As a matter of fact, about 1913, a law was passed to prevent them from working more than sixteen hours per day. During this period the craft system and the craft officials filled all the needs the workers required of them. Because the workers are kept busy, although their hours are long and their wages low and their demands of the capitalists through their unions are usually very modest. And also during the periods of industrial expansion, employers are able to give the workers a concession now and then to keep them fairly satisfied. But these "good old" times of steady work and overtime are practically gone. Problems are piling up before the railroad workers, as well as before workers in general, which the craft union and the craft bureaucrat cannot solve for them.

Unemployment, wage-cuts, speed-up and loss of working conditions are now staring the railroad workers in the face. And as we are now dealing with the Brotherhood bureaucrats we will look into what they have done or rather failed to do to meet these conditions which the railroad workers are now confronted.

Since 1921, when the railroad work-

ers took their first pay cut after the war, the role of its leadership has been an unbroken process of betrayals. In 1921, in spite of a nearly 100% strike vote to resist the cut, the leaders accepted it with the excuse, "that we cannot strike against the government" and this in spite of the fact that the Roads had already been returned to private management. In 1922, eight of the lowest paid crafts received a second pay cut. Seven of those crafts forced their officials to resist the cut with a strike. Grable, the \$14,000 a year leader of the section men was able to hold his organization in check regardless of its vote to strike. So Grable together with the bureaucrats at the head of the other eight higher paid crafts kept their membership from interfering with the smashing of the Shop Crafts by their employing of the Shop Crafts by their employers

## Lovestone Splitters Call for Unity

The Lovestone faction has once more put forward an appeal for the "unity of the Communist movement", in a letter addressed to the official party, to itself, and to the Left Opposition. Such an appeal costs the Right wingers nothing. To Lovestone and Co. it is a purely journalistic gesture which obligates them to no retreat from the positions to which they have been advancing for the past two years and more, but with the aid of which they hope to cover up or excuse the course they have followed up to now.

The solemn hypocrisy of the Lovestone appeal is unexcelled. The leaders of the Right wing, who expelled the Left Opposition from the party without the remotest pretense at a democratic discussion, who sought to train their followers in the art of the blackjack and brass knuckles as the sole means of dealing with the "counter-revolutionists", who violently disrupted our meetings by thuggery, assaulted our comrades physically, and even burglarized our offices, whose sole contribution to date to the discussion between us and them has been to lie and misrepresent now blithely call upon us to join hands with them to "achieve unity in order that all the Communist forces may be united in one powerful Communist party".

Furthermore, what sort of horse-play is it with the highly important and serious problem and slogan of Communist unity when the Right wing chiefs invite the Left Opposition to "achieve unity" on the basis which they very "cleverly" calculate will automatically exclude us from a united party? At the meeting to celebrate their unity appeal, Gitlow, speaking in their name, set down the bases upon which Communist unity was to be attained, and included in them one which called for the unconditional defense of the workers fatherland. Without wasting a moment on Gitlow's deliberate falsification of our standpoint, on what basis then do the Lovestonites conceive that we are to be invited to join in a "re-united Communist party", particularly when they have not, to this day, repudiated their action in expelling us from the party which they at one time controlled?

The whole affair smacks of that cheap and petty-fogging kind of maneuver which is so characteristic of Lovestonian high politics, which is neither conceived nor executed with any spirit of responsibility or seriousness. Matters become even clearer when the "appeal" is examined in the light of the recent past and the relationships between the Right wing liquidators and the Communist movement as a whole.

At just what moment was Lovestone struck with the burning need of unity of "all the Communist forces"? Up to the present time, the course that he and his colleagues have pursued, has been one of the unity of all the anti-Communist and reformist forces against the Communist party. It is precisely this course, which has become a stench in the nostrils of every honest revolutionist in the country and has lost Lovestone whatever little support he ever had in the Communist ranks, which the recent "appeal" is intended to cover up. But the trick will not work.

Were Lovestone and Co. working to "bring about Communist unity" by proposing and actively working for the liquidation of the National Miners Union, the National Textile Workers Union, and the Needle Trade Workers Industrial Union, working for this end in collaboration with all shades of reformism? Was it for "Communist unity" that Gitlow, Zimmerman and Co. went to Paterson as the agents of Muste, and the fakers of the United Textile Workers Union in order to smash the Left wing movement—a job which was facilitated for them, as we pointed out, by the criminal blunders of the Stalinists? Is it for "Communist unity" that Zimmerman, the Right wing spokesman in the reactionary needle trades unions, unites with such notorious labor skates as Levy and reactionary anarchists as Bluestein—to mention but two cases—for the purpose of combatting the Communists? In a word, do the Lovestonites expect the Communist workers to take their "Communist unity" appeals seriously, when they have demonstrated so incessantly that their conception of it is a united

### Nothing Done to Rebuild the Unions

Since 1922 practically nothing has been done by the Brotherhood officials to rebuild the unions. In spite of the millions collected in dues, in spite of the thousands of salaried officials on the Brotherhoods' payroll, regardless of the fact that the leaders were well provided with both men and money, they have done nothing in a concerted way to organize and educate the railroad workers. Instead of rebuilding the unions and getting them to amalgamate towards an industrial union the leaders tried to build banks and investment companies. The net results of these financial ventures were to the effect, that the members paid for a costly lesson to learn that their leaders knew as little about successful investments as they knew successful labor leadership.

In the next article we will deal further with the condition in which the railroad workers find themselves in the face of unemployment and wage cuts as a result of a bankrupt leadership.

—A. E.

# Unemployment and the Party

(Continued from last issue)

For us, it is axiomatic that we must continue to fight. What we must do, is to add to the slogans of Unemployment Insurance and relief those practical slogans which, while answering to the needs of the workers will appeal to them in terms of work. Such slogans exist. They are principally: the slogan of the Six Hour Day, Five Day Week with no reduction in pay and the slogan of large scale, long term credits to the Soviet Union. In addition to their applicability to the present condition of the working class both at home and abroad, which has been elaborated in the columns of the Militant and by comrade Trotsky, these slogans have precisely that quality which is so necessary in the present circumstances.

The Six Hour Day, Five Day Week, entirely possible with the high development of American industry is slowly winning the approval of sections of the American working class. It appears reasonable to them and a means of relieving unemployment, by cutting down the working day and week and putting men to work. It is urged even by sections of the capitalist class. These gentlemen intend, of course, that the six hour day shall be accompanied by a corresponding cut in pay. We propose that there should be no wage cut. The workers will decide. If the party were to take up this slogan and launch a movement around it, it would penetrate all sections of the working class and stir them into motion to realize it.

The "work" aspect, so to speak, of the slogan of credits to the Soviet Union is no less valid. Increased trade relations with the Soviet Union as a result of a movement led by the party organized along the line elaborated by comrade Trotsky in his pamphlet "World Unemployment and the Five Year Plan", would result in concretizing the interest of the American workers for the socialist solution as expressed in the Soviet economy, and would alleviate unemployment here by opening factories now closed. For these slogans the workers will fight.

All these considerations together lead to the conclusion that the Six Hour Day should be the central slogan and that together, these three slogans constitute the essentials of a program on which the masses, both employed and unemployed can be united in a powerful movement. This is the program of the Opposition.

Unfortunately, the party does not see the problem in this light. The Dec. 3rd resolution of the T. U. U. L. Executive Committee affirms again that unemployment insurance must be the central slogan: "We must strive to organize the unemployed into the Unemployed Councils—with the demand for unemployment insurance in the center." Although the demands for a seven hour day and trade relations with the Soviet Union are included they are not conceived as levers to unite the masses and set them in motion. This is obvious from the method laid down to overcome the separation of the "unemployed movement" from "the red union movement".

This unity is to be affected as follows: "in order to abolish these weaknesses it is important during times of strikes to draw the unemployed into the strike committees, into the mass picket lines,—and on the other side, to place in specific shops concrete demands regarding the unemployed. For example,

the re-hiring of laid-off workers, etc." But what if there are no strikes; are the movements not to be united? On this question the resolution is silent.

It is apparent that the party still conceives the fight for unemployed insurance as a movement primarily of the organizational forms by which the resolution proposes to carry out the party program on unemployment. On this subject the resolution says, "The basic form of organization of the unemployed council is the neighborhood council, elected by the workers in the neighborhood, unemployment agencies, soup kitchens, etc." Thus, no doubt, will be the purest form of the united front from below. There is no mention here of uniting the employed and unemployed. This makes a mockery of the resolution's declaration that, "These organizations (of the unemployed) must be organized on the united front basis". Nor is this distorted conception of the united front redeemed by adding at the very end of the section dealing with this question, the sentence, "All the unemployed councils have representatives of employed workers." It is not explained in the resolution how the employed workers who have already signified their refusal to enter the existing mechanically controlled, narrow councils are to be brought into them.

The program of the Opposition proposes that the unemployed councils be genuine, broad united fronts consisting of representatives of organizations of workers of all political or no political tendencies, as well as unemployed workers from agencies, etc. This, of course, is possible upon the basis of a correct program and a regime of working class democracy in the councils. The Stalinist version is now too well known. It is anathema to workers in the A. F. of L. and out of it. On this score, the resolution is silent too. This silence is an ominous sign. It signifies that the policy of expulsion for holding non-Communist and anti-Stalinist views will continue. On such a basis there can be no united front.

It is plain that the party's program on unemployment and the organizational forms it proposes are essentially the same as those with which it has failed to unite the masses for unemployment insurance. There is, therefore, no need to repudiate the opportunism of Browder and his former policy. On the contrary, it whitewashes them. "The present developments do not require a change in policy."

The Stalinists are preparing another defeat for the fight for unemployment insurance. The results will be disastrous. The despicable demagoguery of the Pittsburgh Reverend, Cox, is a warning that if the Communists do not learn how to lead the fight for unemployment insurance, all sorts of riff-raff will divert movement into channels harmless to the capitalist class.

Against this danger and for the correct policy, the Opposition will continue to fight. For this, it has been created. It calls upon its comrades in the party to fight shoulder to shoulder with it for the six-hour day, unemployment insurance, credits to Soviet Union; for genuine united front unemployed councils; against bureaucracy, for working class democracy in the councils; for the unity of the Communist vanguard.

T. STAMM.

## 'Father' Cox Gets Free Hand in Pittsburgh

PITTSBURGH, PA.

Pittsburgh, the center of three of the greatest basic industries: coal, iron and steel, has yielded to the masters fabulous profit wrung from the sweat and blood of the toilers exploited in these mines, mills and factories. Pittsburgh was always considered "the barometer" of capitalist economic conditions. To-day this great industrial city still continues to be a barometer but a barometer of an entirely different nature. It now gauges the revolutionary perspectives of this country. The mines are shut down, workers striking, mills and factories practically silent, and thousands upon thousands of unemployed workers idly roam the streets, driven by desperation of hunger and fear of eviction, to resort to begging, charity, petty pilferage, suicides, and—Father Cox. All this in the "land of Mellon", a city synonymous with wealth and prosperity and,—the "Coal and Iron Police".

It is appalling to note the number of men, women and children who come to the door begging for food and clothing. They tramp in from the near-by mining and mill towns surrounding Pittsburgh, driven by the pangs of hunger and destitution, abandoned by the coal and iron barons since there are no more profits to grind out of them. What more fertile soil could the holy, flag-waving Father Cox find in which to fulfill his "sacred" mission as a Messiah for the workers? This man whose breast is filled with "pure altruism" for the victims of this capitalist brutality and who is prepared for ever greater and unselfish and unsparring efforts in the interests of the unemployed, even if the reward be but a presidential candidacy. His popularity continues on the increase daily with his public soup kitchens where hundreds and hundreds of helpless, discarded workers are fed soup, coffee and bread, his Hunger March to Washington, his "Shanty Town", speeches over the radio and on January 10th as a climax, the mass demonstration at Pitt Stadium in which 70,000 workers, men, women and children assembled to voice their protests against their miserable conditions.

The sight of a soup kitchen is quite familiar to all of us these days but a "Shanty Town" such as exists in Pittsburgh, "the workshop of the world", is a new kind of home for scrapped workers of industry, a real eye sore and a rotten ulcer upon this decaying society.

Upon an open lot, at the rear of Father Cox's church, located at Liberty and 17th St., is found this modern mode of living for unemployed workers when the bosses can no more use them to extract profits. Little shacks, the size of out-houses, slapped together from every conceivable kind of refuse material, from a piano box to old chicken crates, and rusty old iron beds as weights to keep the roofs from flying away when a wind blows. Gas pipes, sewer pipes, etc., act as chimneys. The workers roam about idly, insufficiently clad, half starved and on their faces an expression of complete abandonment. They look forward only to the pitiful handout that may come through this benevolent underhanded politician whose only object is to beat political capital out of the misery of these jobless workers.

In the face of such scenes of working class misery it is only natural to want to know how the Communist Party of Pittsburgh, the vanguard of the working class here, is handling the situation with regards to Father Cox and unemployment.

In contacts with some of the unemployed under Father Cox's leadership, which by the way is the only unemployed movement noticeable in the city, it was easy to detect that not all of his followers are convinced that Father Cox

is the workers' Messiah. The workers are approachable and show a willingness to listen to anyone who discusses with them their real conditions and problems. They show an eagerness for a program of unemployment activities and fight against their masters. Yet it is hard to recollect a single instance where the party made the slightest effort either by fraternization or by leaflet to gain the confidence of these workers, to explain to them the real source of their miseries and the practical revolutionary way out.

On Saturday, January 16th, the day designated for the unemployment demonstration of jobless women, some 70,000 workers—men, women and children, turned out under Father Cox's leadership, at the Pitt Stadium, to demonstrate and demand relief. The general character of this mass demonstration presented all the earmarks of a political campaign,—several brass bands, patriotic music, flying flags, presentation of flowers and medals, and numerous speakers, all trying to out-do each other in their eulogies of Father Cox, proclaiming him the national hero of the day. It was the usual demagoguery of the church and not at all surprising. What was striking, however, was the absence of the Communist party membership. They had evidently thought it much wiser to stay away and not interfere with such a "great and important" event as the assembling of 70,000 workers demonstrating for unemployment relief under the leadership of the boss class. Not a single effort was made by the Stalinist leadership to approach these workers or explain by leaflet the breakdown of the capitalist system causing their unemployment and misery, and to present to them acceptable slogans such as the struggle for the 6 hour day without reduction of pay, the 5 day week and extension of long term credit to the Soviet Union,—slogans which are momentary, realistic enough for the workers to respond to in the immediate. Not even the "constructive" plan of physical attack of the jobless and break-up of the demonstration came to pass. Whether the workers who were to carry out such strategy, saw through the folly of this hooliganism, it is hard to say, but not unlikely.

It is important to note, however, that the maximum of activities on the part of the vanguard of the working class here under the Stalinist regime amounts to standing up within their own little sect, talking about means of breaking up workers unemployed demonstrations, instead of lending them real Communist leadership in their daily struggles on to the proletarian revolution.

I. ARCY.

## Unser Kampf off Press

We are sure that Unser Kampf will delight our comrades: for the first time, comrade Trotsky's article on the situation in Germany will be printed in the Jewish language. Greetings from our French comrades, who hope to spread Unser Kampf among hundreds of Jewish speaking workers in France. Letters from our comrades relating to the struggles in their localities and in the particular industries from all over the country.

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## Young Spartacus Out

The third issue of Young Spartacus, official organ of the Opposition youth is off the press. In this issue are featured reports on the Anti-War Youth Conference, and the convention of the Young People's Socialist League. In addition the youth section of the thesis of the Russian Opposition is reproduced, also, an article on Trotsky and the youth.

Subscription rates are 50¢ a year, and 5¢ the single copy. All comrades and sympathizers are asked to subscribe and order bundles of Spartacus for distribution and sales. Send in all orders to:  
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# Chicago Stalinists Disrupt Conference

A "broad mass United Front Conference to fight against Criminal Syndicalist Laws" was held here in Peoples' Auditorium by the I. L. D. last Sunday.

It was in every respect a "united front" of the present day Stalinist variety. All the I. W. O., I. L. D., Unemployed Councils and sundry organizations of the Communist party were there. There was also present comrade Frank Buckley, delegate representing the Communist League of America (Opposition).

Joe Tash was chosen by the bureaucrats to deliver the main report to the Conference. He talked. He told the audience that the bosses are fighting the workers. He admits at the same time that he does not know so much about the Criminal Syndicalist laws themselves. He also warns the audience against the "Trotskyites" whom his keen eye perceives in the hall. He said that this small group of "renegades" was sure to advance a project for a united front with the fakers of the A. F. of L.

Comrade Buckley immediately took the floor and attempted to refute the lies of Tash, stating correctly the Leninist united front principle that workers organizations, irrespective of political tendency, must be organized into a fight against the capitalist class on such specific issues like Criminal Syndicalism, which could undoubtedly rally behind it large sections of workers, even those who for the present may even be against Communism.

No sooner did comrade Buckley sit down when Bill Gebert, D. O. of the party takes the floor. His face was red and blue. His eyes rolled violently in their orbit. The gleaming white of his eyes could be seen in the back of the hall and might have furnished an excellent target for Colonel Prescott's men at the battle of Bunker Hill. He fumed and stormed and the froth dripped from his

mouth. While ordinarily it is difficult to understand Gebert when he talks, under this pathological condition it was almost impossible. However, piecing his words together here and there, we heard such choice bits of slander as "Ray Edmondson, Illinois mine faker, ally of the Trotskyites". He also attacked Gerry Allard as stool-pigeon. Saying that he appeared as witness against him in the Benton, Ill., hearing and testified that the National Miners' Union in Illinois was a strike-breaking organization.

From this he generalized the term stool-pigeon to apply to the whole Left Opposition. Pointing with his finger at comrade Joseph Giganti, delegate from the Italian Workers' Club, he called for mob action. Without even a chance to utter a word in answer to the cowardly attack, Giganti was pounced upon by a bunch of hoodlums and forcibly ejected from the hall. He pointed also to Buckley in the same manner, but out of respect for his huge size, the hoodlums were more cautious in handling him.

The meeting then dragged on for several more hours. It was a successful Stalinist united front and the delegates all went home deeply imbued with an object lesson in the "ideological" methods of the present party leadership.

### STATEMENT OF THE CHICAGO LEFT OPPOSITION

The crying need of the hour is unity of our class forces to fight the bosses' offensive, but once again the criminal action of the Stalinist bureaucrats scatters our forces. They again demonstrated their deadening influence upon our Communist party at the Sunday conference to fight the Criminal Syndicalist Laws. They not only ejected comrade Frank Buckley, delegate from the Communist League after he spoke on the Leninist

United Front but also forcefully ejected comrade Joe Giganti delegate from the Italian Workers' Club. This action came after Bill Gebert, the D. O., stirred up the lesser bureaucrats with a speech in which he said there are stool-pigeons and counter-revolutionists in the hall and pointed to these two comrades. Much resentment and protest was shown to this action but the well oiled machine moved on and a dead and dry conference of about 200 went on.

The membership must resist such anti-working class action by the bureaucrats. The bureaucrats cannot throw out the representatives of the most revolutionary wing of Communism without at the same time closing the door to the broad strata of workers moving in the direction of Communism. Scores of such examples can easily be pointed out but one of the latest in Chicago is the Mooney-Harlan Conference of two months ago which promised a bigger and broader one in December. It is long past due and nothing has been done to mobilize the workers for Mooney who still rots in jail while the reformers and politicians are taking advantage and making a football out of the case.

The unseating of the Left Opposition through fear and inability to withstand our Marxist criticism at the same time carried with it the construction of a huge unnatural wall between the class. Morgenstern and Goodman are sentenced in Pennsylvania for Sedition and their representative in Chicago is denied the right to speak, when he calls on all to unite to fight the Criminal Syndicalist Laws and for its victims.

We call upon the workers and sympathizers to work for a broad united front movement, to fight for the release of class war prisoners and against the Criminal Syndicalist laws and support the I. L. D. in this work as far as it will go.