

if the rank and file will not get in a year what the Grand Chief will get from the workers in a month?

It evidently mattered not at all, for the press dispatches state that "Wage reductions ordered by the Railway Labor Board were not discussed." The convention closed without even a discussion of the most important facing the railway worker—evidently for lack of time; the delegates were too tired. They had just enough time to raise Stone's salary a bit.

Nothing more clearly indicates the utter bankruptcy of the present leadership of the American Trade Unions than this one incident at Cleveland.

### LORD GOMPERS, THIS IS YOUR FIGHT!

Since the publication of our last issue the fight against Gompers in the American Federation of Labor has assumed proportions that are as astounding as they were unexpected. In the past twenty five years the election of the President of the A. F. of L. was little more than an empty form which was repeated year after year with practically no opposition. What opposition there was usually came from socialist delegations which now and again screwed up their courage sufficiently to make a perfectly harmless attack upon the invulnerable Trade Union Czar. To be sure Gompers too had his enemies in the organization. But the grand old man is, if anything, a shrewd politician, and has developed, in the years of his presidency, an extended system of patronage that effectively bought off every disgruntled opponent before he became really dangerous. He watched over every position to be filled in the Federation itself. The government in Washington has always sought Gompers' recommendation in filling certain offices and commissions. International, and even local unions, have been trained to wait upon the word of the Grand Chief before appointing their most important officers, in return for very definite favors for the organization.

But evidently Mr. Gompers has overreached himself. The opposition to his presidency, which only a few weeks ago seemed a weak and unorganized uprising on the part of a few dissatisfied gentlemen, is spreading like wild-fire, and draws one group after the other into line. First of all there are the Irish, who form a strong numerical contingent of the American Labor movement, and who are up in arms over Gompers' opposition to the cause of Irish freedom, after it had found indorsement in two consecutive conventions. They accuse him of pro-British sympathies, and interpret his unqualified support of the League of Nations as a pro-British act.

There are, furthermore, the Republicans, who stood little chance, under the regime of the Democratic Gompers, of participating in the division of the spoils. They realize that there are certain government offices of importance that have always been filled upon the recommendation of the American labor chieftain, and are eager, consequently to remove the Democratic Mr. Gompers in order to put one of their own choice in his place.

There are, moreover, the mine workers who have now united upon a program of nationalization, for which they can hope no sympathy from the Mr. Gompers who so effectively side-tracked the agitation for

the "Plumb Plan". With them, for the same reason, stand the Railroad Brotherhoods.

Finally there is another element that has joined the chase. It consists of those who, for various reasons, are up in arms against Gompers' hostile attitude against Russia, reasons that are by no means either revolutionary or idealistic. They simply maintain that the United States, in keeping up a virtual blockade against Russia, has cut off a valuable market for American products, and insist upon the reopening of trade relations with Soviet Russia because such a step would mean employment for hundreds of thousands that are idle to-day. Not only Johnston and Lewis, both of them candidates for the presidency, but also Timothy Healy, the erstwhile Crusader against everything that was socialistic, who has turned over a new leaf since his recent trip to Europe showed him how deep the chasm is that yawns between capital and labor, are among his bitterest adversaries.

In this connection the position of the Jewish Unions is not without interest. They who always flaunted the red flag of radicalism to the world, but never voted against Gompers in American Federation of Labor conventions, they who, in spite of their little tin God, Meyer London, have always supported Soviet Russia, have until now, so far as we have been able to discover, steadfastly refused to take sides. Not even the diplomacy of the Irish element, who persist in calling Gompers a Britisher, because they fear that too much stressing of his Semitic origin would antagonize this powerful element, has succeeded in drawing them out.

In America it is dangerous to judge the size and strength of a movement from the noise that it makes. And it is by no means an established fact that the convention, whose delegates have always been elected under the paternal eye and the guiding of the all powerful Gompers machine, will register the dissatisfaction of the membership or respond to the noisy protestations of his opponents. But for the first time since he assumed the presidency of American organized labor, Gompers is rocking on his throne. And it will take all the cleverness of which the old fox is capable to keep it from turning over.

### A FREE PRESS AND THE NEW YORK CALL

The New York Call and the Milwaukee Leader have at last won their fight for the restoration of second-class mailing privileges. The Call signaled its victory by printing on its first page a eulogy of the glories and greatness of a free press, holding that without such freedom "brute force must rule and not the force of ideas," "Let those who will," it declared, "sneer at freedom of the press and speech." This is of course strictly in line with the Jeffersonian attitude of the Call.

The New York Evening Post comments on this editorial. It subscribes to "this admirable plea for freedom of thought," and adds that "it looks forward to the day when the Call will hasten to invoke those principles not only for capitalistic America but for Soviet Russia." And the Evening Post, it must be admitted, is at least logical. One cannot quite well sing the glories of free speech and at the same time either expressly or by implication ap-

prove the suppression of counter-revolutionary papers by Soviet Russia.

No one will seriously claim that thought and speech should not be "free," that is, that all people should have the right to freely express their ideas and thoughts. But our thinking has been so warped by the notions of liberalism, that it is impossible for a great many, including the editors of the Call, to realize that when a government refrains from suppressing Socialist newspapers, that does not as a result give us a free press; nor does it make the press free. Such thinking leaves out of consideration the fact that in order that there really be a free press, all classes must have the material necessities for the maintenance of a press. Such means are at present, in every capitalist country, exclusively the possession of the capitalist class. This class controls the press, and it actually owns it.

Not only is it impossible for the workers at present to possess a press of any importance, but the power of the government is always ready at hand to suppress any Socialist paper which, in the opinion of the executive committee of the capitalist class, is guilty of printing matter which is seditious, that is, matter which the ruling class would rather not have circulated.

The policy of the new postmaster-general, Mr. Hays, is by no means a victory for free speech, even in the liberal sense. Under the new policy, papers that fall afoul of the law as interpreted by Mr. Hays, will be barred entirely from the mails, instead of enjoying the blessings of the third-class rates when judged unworthy of the second.

It is childish, nay worse, to talk about the press being free under capitalism. A free press, like the rest of our "liberties," is a purely political right, and without any economic power behind it, it is not worth very much. The fact that workers may send their paper through the mails will not give them any press to send through the mails. The right of assemblage, when all the halls are owned by the masters, will not avail very much.

The press will not be free until the workers not only have the "right" but also the material means at their disposal with which to make the exercise of this right possible. This is a condition we can look forward to only when capitalism has been finally abolished. The press will not be "free" during the transition from capitalism to socialism. The workers' dictatorship will have to defend itself against counter-revolution just as the capitalist dictatorship defends itself now by sending to jail Debs, Larkin, Gitlow, Ruthenberg, Ferguson and Winitsky for expressing and printing ideas which the capitalist dictatorship thinks dangerous to its rule.

The decision of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals of June 6, sustaining Burleson's exclusion of the Call from the second class mails, came just a week after the Call's somewhat premature celebration of Hays' order as a "victory" for a free press. The class conscious Court of Appeals understands quite fully the need of muzzling the worker's press. It has the power to do so and will allow nothing to stand in the way, not even the so-called guaranty of free speech contained in the First Amendment.

The court stands squarely with the Constitutional Convention of 1787 which, speaking through Gouverneur Morris, held that "life and liberty were generally said to be of more value than property. An accurate view of the matter would, nevertheless, prove that property was the main object of society."

The courts stand ready to protect property—that is, the capitalist system. They make no efforts to disguise their intention and purpose. And will allow no such notion as freedom of the press to stand in the way.

By this time, the New York Call is perhaps somewhat disillusioned about its great "victory."

### NOTE

The editors wish to make it clear that The Workers' Council is not the organ of the Committee on the Third International of the Socialist Party or of any Left Wing of the Socialist Party or of any organized political group.

It has given its columns freely to the Committee on the Third International, and it stands ready to do the same for any group which is attempting to spread a knowledge of the principles and policies of the Third International and which is helping to mould revolutionary Socialist opinion in this country.

### INCREDIBLE MENSHEVIK ATROCITIES

The Revolutionary Military Council of Soviet Georgia has issued the following for publication:

"Let the whole world, let the workers of all countries know of the vilanies committed by the Georgia Government, at the time of their shameful flight from Tiflis. Amongst the several thousands of workers and peasants that were seized by the completely demoralized bands of Mensheviks during their retreat, were a number of innocent women, who were subjected to torture. These tortures were carried out by these Menshevik executioners, by the orders of Rezheze: Rizsheshvilly, Subagvilidze, Pagchunya, and others.

Their savagery went to such extremes that at the retreat from Katais, they brought out several Communists: Merdaleishvile, Ackloff and others, from prison, and after savagely torturing them, shot them dead. In order to hide all trace of their crime, they saturated the corpses with benzine and burned them. One of the victims of the Menshevik executioners is Comrade Luckian Tabukashvili, a warrior of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, the commander of the armored car column of the late Ukraine Soviet Red Army, a bearer of the Order of the Red Flag and other distinctions.

Comrade Tabukashvili, since last autumn, has lived uninterruptedly in the house of his brother, in one of the villages in the Katais Gubernia, where he came for a rest from Soviet Russia. Comrade Tabukashvili lived in Georgia during the Jouridine Government, and he kept entirely away from politics. In the night of March 6th he was taken out, first tortured and then shot. According to comrades who were with him, he died a heroic death, worthy of a Red Warrior. The Government of the Socialist Soviet Republic of Georgia has decided to give Comrade Tabukashvili a state funeral in Tiflis.

Long live the memory of the warrior hero of the Workers-Peasants' Armies! Long live the great Red Army, the defender of the laboring masses! Long live the World Proletarian Revolution!

Signed: Macharadze, President of the Revolutionary Military Council of Georgia. Ordzhonikidze, Member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Caucasian Front.