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No. 6

The Menace of Company Unions

Railroads, Street Railways and Packing Houses Have Scab "Unions"

By H. M. WICKS.

Swift & Co. Wages Stationary Since November, 1921, Cut

Swift & Co., hog and cattle butchers, and part of the Meat Packing Trust, publish a year-book and its 1923 edition contains an illuminating paragraph on labor conditions in its works, where the company "union" system is in operation.

Under the caption "Labor Conditions" we read:

"Relations with our employes since I reported to you last year have been harmonious. Our employes are developing a great interest in our Assembly Plan of representation, and we believe that the inauguration of this plan has been a really constructive step in improving relations between management and employes. There has been no change in wages since November, 1921."

On another page, dealing with the merits of the Assembly Plan, which is another name for the company union, we read that this plan was "going through a severe test when the 1922 year book was issued." This severe test was experienced because the wage change in November, 1921, was a reduction in wages. The Swift pamphlet says: "The assemblies had been asked to accept a very necessary wage reduction in November of 1921, and although our assemblies sanctioned this reduction a strike was called by the unions. This strike was opposed by a great majority of our workmen, who continued at their jobs, thus upholding the action of their representatives in the assemblies."

The 1923 Year Book, like all other publicity of Swift & Co., is simply for propaganda purposes. In the Swift unions the department foremen and straw bosses

(Continued on Page 8)

THE one hope of the working class is the building of powerful class organizations to carry on an uncompromising struggle against capitalism both on the economic and political field. There can be no independent organizations of labor, if such organizations are dominated by capitalism. Company unions are travesties upon real unionism and are deadly enemies of the working class. Every effort must be made by intelligent labor to expose and destroy these organizations. Either we destroy them or their spread will mean the destruction of trade unionism, many of the great industries of this country.

THE time is at hand when the workers of America must rise and destroy company unions everywhere they are established. Already this blight holds in its deadly embrace thousands upon thousands of workers on the railroads and all these fake "unions" are under the direction of the notorious "General" Atterbury, labor-hating crusader against every vestige of liberty for workingmen. The Mitten system on the Philadelphia Street Railway has been extended from the seat of its cancerous growth to Buffalo. Already Mittenism plans the conquest of Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Chicago. Regular brigades of company union scabs are being trained to destroy the street railway unions everywhere. The meat packers are falling into line and unionism is fighting for its life with hopelessly incompetent reactionary leaders, unable to rally the membership of the bona-fide labor unions to the struggle against this despotism. Everywhere the exploiters of labor are marshalling their forces for the next "open shop" drive to accompany the industrial depression threatening the country today. The petrified reaction at the head of the A. F. of L. cannot act. The rank and file of labor must act or every achievement of unionism will be destroyed before this next wholesale assault of the imperialist masters of America.

Company Union "Elections" On Pennsylvania Railroad

"General" Atterbury of the Pennsylvania Railroad is a staunch advocate of a strictly 100 per cent American plan of unionism. Like all hundred per-centers, his sole aim is to reduce the working class to a condition of abject slavery. This latest form of scabbery is bedecked with all the trappings of democracy, that forlorn hag that has served every oppressor of labor since Professor Wilson issued the clarion call to make the world safe for democracy.

More company union propaganda emanates from the Pennsylvania railroad than from any other single source in the United States. The most sinister piece of publicity regarding this form of unionism occurred on October 15 of this year in the form of a circular "for the information of the public," giving the results of a recent "election." In the circular it was claimed that the non-union shopmen manifested a great interest in the election and that the percentage of employes voting was much larger than the percentage of voters who participate in general elections.

Compulsory Democracy
An analysis of the Pennsylvania State age ul

in gangs to the booths, where they were watched by stool pigeons until the vote was cast. The men were paid for their time while voting, and in case of men not at work on that day taxicabs were hired to bring them to the polls. To refuse to incur the enmity of the and meant discharge.

The boast of the railroad shopmen voted numbers is in striking to the situation existing when the company union resulted in the working to vote. In this managers simply serves as "officials" and called a conference up regulations ules, but not attended. Ur officials" put into effect the general the cons Here " the

"Mittenism," a System of Street Railway Scabbery

As the scab company union the Pennsylvania system model for the railroads, a "company union" on the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Co. is the model for all street way companies when it crusades against labor.

The Philadelphia der the control of Mitten, chairman of directors of the

Some twelve Philadelphia ized at \$30, watered stock bankruptcy and conserve method of stock, w to ext enor every profit was se I

"Mittenism," a System of Street Railway Scabbery

(Continued from Page 1)
slaves in the United States, bare none. They supinely submit to any imposition on the part of Thomas E. Mitten, his son, Dr. A. A. Mitten and the company legal counsel, one C. J. Joyce.

Under the company union system, officials of the "union" can not hold their official positions unless they are employed by the company. Hence if such a miracle should occur as the election of an official of the "union" who is not subservient to the company he would be discharged and thereby automatically cease to "represent" the men who elected him.

Each unit of employment has a committee that is supposed to settle disputes and grievances of every kind arising in that particular unit. There is one such committee in each car barn, shop and office. Each committee is composed of half employees and half persons representing the management. The decisions are "arbitrary," that is, the vote majority decides the question of the company, in addition its approved representative has to control one representative in order even its own fake

smashed the regular enables the company greater surplus in order to create dividends for its

Scabs. railway system school is cohorts extending street railway city was the suffrage

pathy with the aims of the strikers. The person responsible for the loss of the strike is Mahon. His hesitancy enabled the enemy to consolidate its forces and when this wavering was apparent, the local politicians turned like jackals against the strikers. They formerly professed to defend. The next chapter was Philadelphia scabs and Mittenism.

Thus the struggle against company unions also involves a struggle against the reaction in the American labor movement. The one paves the way for the other.

Company Union "Elections" On Pennsylvania Railroad

(Continued from Page 1)
sylvania system were presented with holiday greetings in the form of discharges. They can now contemplate the glorious of company unionism during the holidays. Being faithful employees, whose interests are identical with those of their bosses they have been amply rewarded.

"General" Atterbury, however, neglected to publish broadcast this particular feature of his great innovation in "unionism." These company "union" men who are now deprived of employment are the ones who helped break the strike of the shopmen. Since the inception of that strike, on July 1, 1922, the railroad employed nearly every person who asked for work and they were all made members of the company union. As in all strikes, many incompetents were given employment. But when a powerful corporation is fighting organized labor, it never considers the cost and always employs incompetents in much larger numbers than the union men they displace. At the first opportunity it ditches these scabs without any compunction whatever.

The shut-down and the laying off of 50,000 men means that the Pennsylvania system is cleaning house and that when it resumes operation again many of the "idle" employees who were as stupid as to scab upon their comrades in the strike will be eliminated because they have been unable to meet the requirements of the road.

Utile Unionism.

Unionism is supposed to be a institution that protects from such assaults as the 50,000 shopmen in Pennsylvania, but unionism, sponsored by the scabs of the men, has been thrown into the gutter of winter what many

Yes, Samuel Gompers Had to Listen to BILL DUNNE'S SPEECH

The Portland Convention of the American Federation of Labor

The speech is acknowledged by friends and foes alike as the most complete and fearless indictment of the "fat boys," the labor fakers, that was ever made. Delivered in answer to the motion by a reactionary official of the miner's union to unseat Dunne. This speech will go down in history, marking a new phase of the class struggle in America.

This Speech is Now Published in a Pamphlet Form

It is the most effective kind of educational work to distribute this widely among union men. This is the time when live wires are needed. It must receive the widest circulation throughout the country.

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LITERATURE DEPARTMENT

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of the unions just found out that the so called Baltimore agreement on the question of seniority provides: The men who remained at work during the strike of the shopmen come first, those hired during the strike—second and the strikers last. More about this in future issues of the Voice.

Swift & Co., Scab Union Holds Workers in Slavery

(Continued from Page 1)

represent the men for the most part. Where they are not actually petty bosses they are grovelling whelps who receive extra pay as informers against people who demand decent conditions in the stock yards.

In the so-called assemblies minutes are carefully kept and stenographic reports made of all important discussion, so that the company can always have a record of the proceedings of the "union." Even though an individual should be selected from a department that was seething with discontent he would not dare propose effective measures against the conditions of employment or he would be thrown bodily out of the assembly and find his pay envelope waiting for him when he returned to his work.

Most of the union "business" transacted in these assemblies has to do with what is called "plant practice disagreements." Of these there were 124, out of a total of 561 "problems" handled up to December, 1922. There were 102 "problems" under the heading "wage adjustments." This category was divided into two sections (a) general wage adjustments and (b) individual wage adjustments. There were 18 general wage adjustments, that is those adjustments affecting a department or a crew, and

the other 84 dealt with individual cases. Included in these individual wage adjustments were such trifles as controversies about overtime, short pay, etc., that are never catalogued in union establishments and that are always settled in favor of the worker, as they are always errors in bookkeeping. The Swift report is unadorned bunk.

The propaganda nature of the pamphlet is revealed when we consider that wage adjustments only totalled 102, while the report says that 376 cases were settled "in favor of the employe." If there was violation of sanitation ordinances and it was corrected, it was set down as in favor of the employe.

As to the November strike everyone who was active in the labor movement in Chicago knows that there were tremendous mass meetings held in the stock yards district at that time and that most of the butchers did respond to the strike call and had practically tied up the plants in Packingtown, when Dennis Lane, labor fakir leader of the strike, was called to Washington and in conference with Secretary of Labor, Davis, and representatives of the packers betrayed the workers and forced them back into the plants.

So with company union scabbery on the inside and trade union fakerism on the outside the helpless slaves of the foul stock yards were driven back into their slave pens like cattle to the abattoirs of the hog and cattle butchers' trust.

But in spite of the treachery of Dennis Lane and his hench-

men the rank and file of the union he heads dare to attack the company on the floor of their assemblies, while the company union forces them to suffer in chains and silence.

In the packing industry, as on the Pennsylvania Railroad—the classic example of company unionism—the workers involved are simply pawns in the hands of the employers and are contributing to the perpetuation of

the most outrageous scabbing under the guise of a new form of unionism.

Every worker in the plants of Swift & Co. should study the reports contained even in their colored propaganda sheet and ponder over the degraded condition to which they have sunk when they submit to such a palpable fraud and historical and economic monstrosity as the employe representation plan.

LIVING COST SWINGING UPWARD.

A perusal of the latest figures on the cost of living issued by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics will dispell whatever illusions one might have about the direction in which the price of food stuffs is travelling.

From October 15, to November 15, 1923, there was an increase in the cost of living in 22 out of the 28 cities investigated. The rise was as high as 3 per cent during the month in certain localities.

For the year ending November 15, 1923 the Bureau found an increase in the cost of living in all of the 28 cities. In the city of Chicago, the price of food-stuffs rose 8 per cent during the year. In the big industrial centers the workers are paying from 50 to 60 per cent more for their food than they paid before the war. Rent and other items have risen even more rapidly.

At the same time, the farmers are up against it and getting more deeply into the slough of depression. Wage cuts are again becoming the order of the day. Only a few days ago the big shoe manufacturers forced their workers in Lynn, Massachusetts to accept a wage cut of 15 per cent.

Naturally one might be prone to ask under the circumstances a rather pertinent question. The farmers are getting worse off. The workers are face to face with increasing unemployment and wage cuts. But the cost of living is swinging upward steadily and swiftly. Who is getting the benefit of the increasing profits?

Perhaps the oil magnates, the bankers, the railway kings, and the coal magnates would volunteer to enlighten us!

There is an advertisement on another page of this paper about Dunn's speech at the A. F. of L. convention at Portland, Oregon. What you can do about it.

FASCISM

This terrible monster which has conquered Italy and threatens Germany and all of Central Europe is raising its head in America. Through conspiracy and violence it is making a bid for power. Its growth is a menace to the militant trade union movement. Here is the first complete explanation published in America.

STRUGGLE OF THE TRADE UNIONS AGAINST FASCISM

By Andreas Nin.
Introduction by Earl R. Browder.

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Workers Party Literature Department

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The Hoax of Company Unionism

We hear much praise of the equality existing between the workers and the bosses in the company unions that have been created throughout many branches of industry in the United States. Such unions are "defended on the fallacious assumption that there is an identity of interest between the worker and the capitalist, the notion that they are partners and that that which benefits one will benefit the other.

Such position is just the reverse of the facts. Since profits in industry are derived from the surplus extracted from labor, it is clear that there can here be no identity of interests. Workers can only raise their wages at the expense of profits and conversely a reduction in wages means an increase in profits for the capitalist. The absurd notion that increased productivity benefits both the worker and the capitalist cannot stand the light of investigation. To explode that notion we only need to consider the thousands of labor-saving devices invented during the past few years, devices that displace many workers. Instead of shortening hours of labor, new inventions that increase production simply displace thousands of workers, thereby increasing the industrial reserve army—the army of unemployed—which is essential to the very existence of capitalism.

The hoax of company unionism is revealed not only as complete abandonment of the class struggle, but recent wholesale reduction in the working forces in many industries where company unions exist show that there is not even that modicum of protection enjoyed by the membership of the most vicious reactionary craft unions.

While reactionary officials constantly sell out the membership of the regular craft unions to the employers, they are forced, in order to retain their positions as labor lieutenants of capitalism, to insist upon certain considerations for the membership of their unions. After all, they are not entirely subservient to the identical employer who lords it over the membership of the union, though most of them are servants of some section of the capitalist class.

In company unions the subservience is complete. Officials of company unions dare not fight for demands of the workers because their own jobs are at stake, they are dependent upon the employer for a living.

Furthermore, in company unions there is no semblance of that collective bargaining which is the boast of the reactionary trade unions. The company union is absolutely controlled by the company, its officials are usually mere committees of officers of the company who call themselves employees, in spite of the fact that they may be ten thousand dollar a year flunkies professing to speak for the laborers whose wage is four dollars per day. The member of a company union, who would dare propose something not suggested by the officials of the company and that happens to be contrary to the company policy, immediately incur the enmity of the

of being rewarded by receiving a hundred dollars or so at one time, but during the year he will strive to increase production under the delusion that he is a partner in the business and that the more he works the more he gets, not realizing the more he works the sooner he will work himself out of a job. Also the deluded worker, believing himself to be a partner in the enterprise, becomes the enemy of every intelligent worker who strives to improve his own condition. Hence the working class "partners" in the companies become potential informers against other workers who dare talk in favor of real unionism as against the fraudulent company brand of industrial scabbery, for company unionism after all is nothing but organized scabbery and as such it must be fought by all workers who do not want to be reduced to helpless cogs in an industrial machine.

Railroad Labor Board

If any worker doubts that the government of the United States and all its auxiliaries are instruments of oppression used by capitalist vandalism against the working class he should consider the Railroad Labor Board and its history in order to set himself right on this question.

When its decisions are so intolerable that workers revolt against them they are promptly pilloried as outlaws. Witness the case of the striking shopmen July 1, 1922.

But the railroads themselves can defy the Labor Board with impunity. Witness the recent action of the Erie Railroad regarding the Board's decision against contracting out maintenance of way work. The Erie railroad, in 1921, turned over a large portion of its track work to the Owen Construction Company, which was in reality a dummy concern for the Erie, and wages of the workers on the sections were cut to 20 cents per hour. Eight months after the first complaint was made, the Railroad Labor Board rendered a decision to the effect that such action was a violation of its provisions.

"If the carrier can legally do this thing," said the Labor Board, "then the transportation act can be nullified and the will of the United States set at naught."

Sometime later the Board respectfully requested the Erie railroad to set forth reasons for refusing to abide by its decision. Then there ensued another period of ten months during which time the point raised by the Board was ignored in silent contempt. Now, after two and a half years from the date of the offense, the Board issues another decision, which is as meaningless as the first one, and will undoubtedly be ignored by the Erie, as was the first decision.

The purpose of the Railroad Labor Board is to keep wages of railroad workers down to the very lowest possible level and to hurl its maledictions against any group of workers that dares ask for decent wages and conditions. The Erie discovered a way to reduce part of its force below this miserable minimum fixed by the Board.

How can the Erie Railroad tell the Board to go to hell and get away with it?

Why, just the same as any other master can tell his slave to go to hell. The government is the instrument of the capitalist exploiters of labor in this country, the railroad board is a part of the governmental machinery. The government does not assail the Erie Railroad because of the Erie stands the real rulers of the States, the financial and industrial magnate above all law. Laws are made in but when it comes to a question of laws they treat such laws as if they really deserve from all

and called upon all true patriots to remain in the employ of the roads. But few union men responded to this hypocritical plea, but many nonunion workers were secured to scab upon the strikers.

Flamboyant promises of rewards for their loyalty were made to these men who had betrayed their fellow workers. Now that thousands of shopmen, who helped break the strike, are being laid off, there is a great hue and cry about the companies forgetting their promises. While such treatment of workers is deplorable, we cannot escape the conclusion that loyalty to capitalism is always rewarded in precisely this manner. The deluded workers, who responded to the call of the Railroad Labor Board are now in the same predicament as the deluded workers who, during the world war, donned soldier uniforms to defend the investments of Morgan & Co., and who were promised their reward for loyalty. The soldiers were told that nothing would be too good for them after they got back from the war. Today they are still waiting for the government of the capitalist class to reward them with a bonus. Many of them have since died, waiting for the fulfillment of the promises of the government, and many railroad workers are now thrown into the ranks of the unemployed for their loyalty to capitalism.

Some day the workers will discover the fact, known to all revolutionists, that loyalty to capitalism is suicide for their own class and will join the ranks of those whose loyalty is to the working class.

HERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY

Many people would have offered most anything for the opportunity to go to Russia during the days of actual revolution in that country a few years ago, just to be there for a day or so, but there were many obstacles in the way. Conditions have changed, and the young Russian writer Iury Libedinsky has offered an opportunity to anyone to be in Russia for one whole week, not in Petrograd though, not in Moscow, but in the country, among the village folks and peasants in far off Russia and witness the Russian Revolution there. "A WEEK" is the title of the first novel written under the Russian Soviet regime by Iury Libedinsky, translated by Arthur Ransom, the author of "Russia in 1918," etc. This novel is just one week out of the period of years of the Russian Revolution. Do not deny yourself the opportunity to be there by sending \$1.50 to the Literature Department of the Workers Party, 1009 N. State St., Chicago, Ill., and the book will be sent you by return mail. Be in Russia for "A WEEK."

"Union" Pawn of Railroads

ALTOONA, Pa.—Not only do the units of the "General Atterbury company union on the Pennsylvania system display their character as tools of the bosses because of their scabbing on union men, but they also serve Atterbury when he wants to manufacture "public sentiment."

A few days ago resolutions were adopted by the company union in this city and forwarded to the federal government requesting the Interstate Commerce Commission to keep up railroad rates. The "faithful and loyal employees" declare they fear a loss in railroad income would ultimately mean a reduction in railroad employees' wages.

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