

revolutionary party at its services, the Communist Party of Germany. Without such a party there is always an imminent danger that the revolutionary energy of the masses either exhaust themselves in partial and disconnected struggles, or that the working class again falls victim to the treachery of some charlatans and traitors.

From a military point of view the enemies of the workers are well organized and armed. They comprise extensive groups of nationalist, monarchist and fascist irregulars; and the regular military and police forces of the empire. But the latter are recruited from the working class mainly. And in a decisive struggle the forces of reaction may find that Wilhelm Liebknecht was not far out of the way when he said that bayonets may be excellent to lean on, but one cannot sit on them with any degree of comfort.

There can be no question that the political atmosphere in Germany is so highly charged with revolutionary electricity that an unexpected clash may cause the great explosion. In fact, the explosion is unavoidable. When it comes the workers have a fair chance for an immediate victory—but a sure chance for an eventual one.

There is, however, an external force that endangers and threatens the workers' revolution in Germany. World capitalism will not stand idle at the hour of death of its German brother. In fact, ideological preparations are made even

today by the socialist and trades union leaders to betray the workers again. Just like their Russian counterparts they will appeal to foreign powers for aid. If they can help it the success of the German workers' revolution will be held up at the point of French bayonets.

But the conditions facing the German revolution are somewhat different from those that confronted the Russian revolution. The German revolution can exploit the experience of the Russian revolution and, as Zinoviev significantly remarked, "not only the experiences of the Russian revolution."

Of course, Soviet Russia will not interfere in the struggle for power between the workers and the capitalists of Germany. It takes the stand that German capitalism must be conquered by the forces of the German workers. But Soviet Russia, nevertheless, will stand guard over the destinies of the German revolution. And when the workers of the world are faced with the task of aiding their German brothers in the latter's struggle by telling their respective governments: "Hands off Workers' Germany," they will be joined by the chorus of their brothers in Soviet Russia. And behind the formidable voice of the government of Soviet Russia there will be not only the rightful indignation of its millions of workers and peasants, but also the millions of bayonets of its red army.

The Campaign for Class Collaboration

By Earl R. Browder

SINCE the days when Mark Hanna organized his "labor lieutenants" into the Civic Federation, collaboration with the capitalist class, the policy of Samuel Gompers in other words, has been the settled policy of the governing circles in the American Federation of Labor. The Civic Federation made an institution of the idea, and entrenched it within the highest circles of the labor movement. The baneful effects upon the development of trade unionism is a subject worthy of the efforts of a good historian. The militant sections of the labor movement revolted against it, to the extent that such an organization as the United Mine Workers wrote a special law into its constitution prohibiting any officer of the union to belong to the Civic Federation. Any history of the American labor movement that does not deal fully with that body will neglect one of the determining factors, the influence of which is hard for the uninitiated to realize.

Never has there been in the past, however, such an organized drive to establish collaboration with

the capitalists as that conducted today in the A. F. of L. All the accumulating forces of reaction in the bureaucratic leadership of the unions seem to have been fused into a concerted movement all along the line to bind the labor movement hand and foot to capitalism and its institutions. The outstanding features of the resulting campaign for class collaboration are; (1) revival of "insurance" as the dominant union function, (2) the epidemic of "labor banks," (3) the Johnston "co-operation" scheme for making the unions into efficiency bureaus for capitalist production, and (4) the program of Gompers and Berry at the Portland Convention of the A. F. of L.

Trade Unionism vs. Insurance Business

Insurance departments in the unions have been an established feature from the beginning of the movement. It has been many years, however, since they have occupied more than an incidental position. They have been accepted as valuable auxiliaries to the unions, but not as the prime

reason for the unions' existence. This has been changed in a group of the most important unions in America, however, within the past year. The railroad shop unions, with their disastrous strike dragging along and their entire fighting front broken up by the incompetence of their leaders, found the membership leaving the unions by tens of thousands. Instead of meeting the threatening situation by a renewed militancy and a program of solidarity, the officialdom resurrected the insurance society features as the basis for their appeal to the membership to rally to the unions.

"Insurance" became the watchword of the union organizers on the railroads. This signified the abandonment of the struggle. It was the beginning of the movement by the trade union leaders toward open collaboration with the employers. It threw a cold wet blanket upon the remaining enthusiasm in the rank and file. It was the signal of surrender, and the membership understood it as such. The effect upon the railroad shop unions was a disintegrating one.

The effort to rebuild the unions as "insurance" societies brought no results. The workers would have nothing of it. Seeing their very jobs threatened by the loss of per-capita tax, the officials frantically began to cast about for schemes to bolster up their failing financial resources, and to figure out measures for strengthening their grip on the organizations. One of the things that came to hand for that purpose was the idea of "labor banks."

Wildcat Banking Schemes

An authority on labor banking made the statement (*Freeman*, N. Y., Nov. 28th), that 15 labor banks are now operating in the united States with a capital of \$50,000,000., and that 10 more are scheduled to begin operations within a few months. The figures give some idea of the craze for labor banks that is sweeping the official circles.

There are two distinct elements in the labor banking situation that must be carefully distinguished. First are those who, feeling secure in the strength of their organizations, felt that they could venture into the field of handling the finances of their organization and membership, and make them the center of a profitable banking business without changing the essential functioning of their organizations. The second group consists of those who felt the ground slipping under their feet, and grasped at the idea of labor banks as a means of making an alliance with capitalistic interests and at the same time tie up the affairs of the union so completely that they could not be removed from office without disastrous consequences. The first group started the labor bank idea as a auxiliary to the union; the second joined the movement as a means of keep-

ing hold of their jobs. It is not clear that banking is a proper function of labor unions if their primary objects are not to be handicapped. Leaving aside that question, there is a vast difference between labor banks organized as auxiliaries, and labor banks organized to give a new economic foundation to bankrupt unions.

The first group consists of the Locomotive Engineers and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. The Engineers are a very conservative organization, while the Clothing Workers are radical. The Engineers could launch a successful bank because of the comparative security of their membership, being a key craft with great strategic power and a conservative tradition. Their bank did not necessarily affect the established functions of the union, although it probably has strengthened its conservative tendencies. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers, because it is more of a militant body compared with American unions generally, and has gained more benefits comparatively for its members, did not take up the labor bank idea from weakness, but because they felt strong enough to handle it. Their bank undoubtedly strengthened the conservative tendencies within the union.

The second group of labor banks, however, do not clearly have such a character in any instance, and in many cases they are definitely designed to bolster up a failing officialdom. That is their essential characteristic. They are instruments of class collaboration. They remove the unions further from the rank and file. They enormously increase the power of the bankrupt officials. They lay the unions helpless before the financial interests. They have no independent strength of their own at all. They are make-shift expedients to lengthen the tenure of office of union leaders unable to make good in the wage and hour struggle. They constitute a menace to the labor movement, and are part and parcel of the campaign for class collaboration in the American unions.

The Johnston "Co-operation" Scheme

But insurance and banking are mild measures in contrast to the drastic proposals of Wm. H. Johnston, president of the International Association of Machinists. He is installing a system whereby the unions become direct agents of the employers in all fundamental questions. He boasts that when his co-operation is established, not a railroad executive will ever again wish to get rid of the unions; a sorry sort of boast, it would seem, which will mean, if true, that the workers will be the ones who wish to rid themselves of the monstrosity that Johnston would impose upon them.

The Johnston scheme is already been touted as a great success on the B. & O. Railroad, where

it is being tried out. "The idea underlying our service to the Baltimore & Ohio," said Mr. Johnston, "may be compared to the idea which underlies the engineering services extended to railroads by large supply corporations which have contracts with these railroads to furnish, let us say, arch-brick, superheaters, stokers, or lubricating oils." The union, in short, is to become a supply corporation to the railroad companies, engaged in the business of selling labor just as another corporation may sell lubricants. It will compete in the market, like any commodity-selling organization, and engage to deliver more work for less cost than non-union labor can deliver. That is the essence of the scheme.

"Industrial Democracy" a la Gompers

At the Portland Convention of the A. F. of L. the final official blessings were given to the whole drive for systematic collaboration with the capitalists. Samuel Gompers, John L. Lewis, and Major Berry were the spokesmen, the first with his proclamation for "industrial democracy," the second with the program of war upon the militants, and the third with his notorious four points. Gompers' statement is a suave and oily repudiation of the trade union struggle, with the kernel of meaning hidden beneath a coating of soft words. Berry's four points are a bold and brutal statement that the unions are to be subordinated to the claims of capitalist private property.

Fresh from battle in New York where Berry had crushed the Pressmen's strike on the daily newspapers, this doughty American Legionist walked into the A. F. of L. Convention where he was hailed as a conquering hero. What was the meaning of Berry's acts in New York and the stormy enthusiasm of his welcome at Portland? Berry quickly disclosed it. He spoke, and the key-note of his speech was this:

We stand for four great principles governing industry. These are the ownership of property, an adequate return on investment, an adequate sum allowed industry for the matter of deterioration, and that all workers, including managers, get proper compensation for what they put into industry.

John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers, was another key-note speaker in this official gathering of the collaborators with the employing class. Speaking after a period when the U. M. W. of A had found its very existence threatened by the employers, the whole speech of Lewis was an appeal for the official program of collaboration. Lewis boasted of his destruction of the Kansas Union, District 14, and the expulsion of Howat. He prided himself upon assisting the British Empire Steel Corporation to break the strike in Nova Scotia, on the ground of sacredness of contracts, ignoring the fact that even his,

sacred contract was not violated there. He was another living symbol, through his obedience to the orders of BESCO in Nova Scotia, of the newly-consolidated program of collaboration.

Gompers' manifesto is more discreet than the utterances of his rough-neck lieutenants, but its meaning is just as definite. A few quotations will outline the entire policy and show how it links together all these various chains in the campaign for complete subordination of the unions to capitalism. The following are key sentences from the manifesto:

We feel that the hour has struck for a pronouncement of the aims of labor that shall more nearly express the full implications of trade unionism than has yet been undertaken. . . . The close of the war marked for us a turning point in human relations and threw into bold relief the inadequacy of existing forms and institutions. . . . Through the muddling conflict of groups (workers vs. capitalists. *Ed.*) who still find it impossible to come together in cooperation we must look to a future that must have its foundation upon *cooperation and collaboration*. . . . Trade unionism must lead the way even at the cost of being branded as reactionary.

Masses Swing to Left, Officialdom to Right

The superficial observer of events in the labor movement judges from the facts above recited and countless others of a similar nature, that the labor movement is becoming more and more reactionary, that the masses are being brought under the control of capitalism more completely than ever before. Such a judgment is mistaken indeed, for the very opposite is true. The basic reason for this concerted swing to the right of the officialdom, for this studied and systematic co-operation with all the varying forces and institutions of capitalism, is the fact that the masses are swinging to the left, are being disillusioned, are becoming radical. The reactionary officialdom cannot go along with the broad, sweeping radicalization of the masses, without making a clean break with their peaceful past. They are either corrupt agents of capitalism or are timid bureaucrats seeking nothing but a peaceful office life with a secure salary. In either case, their reaction toward the seething rank and file unrest is one of fear, and retreat to the protecting arms of the masters, the capitalist employers.

That the collaboration schemes will prove destructive of trade unionism there is no question. But that it will solve any of the fundamental problems of the present industrial order, only the politically feeble-minded can believe. The collaboration scheme is bound to fail as surely as water must seek its lowest level. In the meantime it must be combatted as the most dangerous and insidious enemy of the working class, and the one which will cost the greatest in working class sweat and blood to overcome.