



Our Revolutionary Heritage:

The Debs Rebellion

By Leighton Rigby

The Pullman strike of 1894 has been called "Debs' Rebellion." Taking root in Chicago, that great conflict quickly spread to twenty-seven states, from Cincinnati to San Francisco.

The American Railway Union was organized in 1893, and some of the more generous contemporary authorities estimated its membership at one million in the following year.

About 2,500 members of the American Railway Union worked in the Pullman shops and lived in the "model town" of Pullman.

The company officials refused to negotiate with representatives of the union and declined to submit the matter to any form of arbitration whatsoever.

On June 21 the members of the American Railway Union voted to cease handling all Pullman cars on any of the twenty-four railroads entering Chicago.

This action, a splendid example of working class solidarity, transformed the strike at Pullman from a localized struggle into one of national prominence and significance.

A Wall Street paper bemoaned the situation: "It is impossible to contemplate the action of the many thousand railway employees in blindly following the mandates of an irresponsible leader, without a feeling of wonder and astonishment."

Cleveland Calls Out the Troops. Chauncey M. Depew, president of the New York Central, pleaded in the interests of those travellers who were hurrying to the bedside of dying mothers, wives and children.

In the meantime, the workers were becoming more and more militant. As far west as California the blockade was almost complete.

A most interesting thing happened at Tacoma, Washington. Troop A of Sprague, consisting of sixty men and said to have been a crack cavalry unit, refused to ride on trains manned by non-union crews.

The Chicago Typographical Union appropriated \$1,000 for the relief of the Pullman workers and sent a demand to Cleveland that he withdraw his support from corporations.

The leadership in the labor unions was far from reactionary in most cases. While Gompers warned the members of the A. F. of L. to stay out of the strike, President McBride of the United Mine Workers predicted civil war if Debs was arrested.

On the grounds that the railroad strike was interfering with the transportation of the mails and was, therefore, a matter involving interstate commerce, U.S. Attorney-General Olney ordered the federal authorities in Chicago to obtain an injunction against the strikers.

On July 17 Debs was arrested, and on December 14 a federal court found him guilty of contempt and sentenced him to six months in prison. The U. S. Supreme Court later upheld the lower court.

Rap Ferrero Deportation

it continued, must be fought in the courts. The Defense Conference is determined to carry through the struggle until the end, up to the Supreme Court of the U. S. if necessary.

The growing realization of the significance of the cases of these two innocent men, persecuted by the government as part of a covered attack on the press of the working class, is shown by the threat of William Randolph Hearst to make the case a national issue in his papers.

WORKERS Protect Yourself Against the Hazards of Life. Join the WORKMEN'S SICK & DEATH BENEFIT FUND OF THE U.S. 1884-1935. Organized, managed by and for workers with only one purpose: to render protection to members and their families, and to support all endeavors and struggles for the improvement of toilers.

Electrical Worker Flays Stalinists For Use of Forgery in Local Union

(Editor's Note: The following article is written by a member in good-standing of Local 3, Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, for the last fourteen years. His revelation of the utter corruption of Stalinism is another indication that this bankrupt movement which scrapes and bows before the bureaucracy does not hesitate to employ the vilest methods against revolutionists in the trade union movement.

By ANDREW FORMAN (Member - Local 3, International Brotherhood Electrical Workers)

For three years, prior to July 1934, a movement of the Rank and File developed in opposition to the reactionary and corrupt officialdom of Local 3, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

The movement grew in spirit, strength and numbers to such proportions that, had it not been for a "sell-out" by such "oppositionists" as Moe Smith, Sam Rosenthal and John Sullivan, who were in strategic positions, there is no doubt that the reactionary officialdom of Local 3 would have been ousted and the control of the Union would now be in the hands of the rank and file and not in the hands of a few corrupt individuals as it is today.

It is not difficult to understand that after such bitter experience the opposition movement would tend to decline. What remained of the opposition movement was more or less a class-conscious politically inclined element.

Maneuvering for Control

Just about this time, November 1934, several members of the opposition disassociated themselves from the Communist Party and joined the Communist League of America (Trotskyists). From that time on slander, bickering and dissension were the outstanding characteristics of the opposition meeting of Local 3.

Although not being a member of any political party and disagreeing with both factions as to certain policies, I nevertheless decided to work with the "Stalinist" faction, hoping that I would eventually succeed in my efforts at reforming the members of the C. P. (By the foregoing I do not pretend that I am above politics, but it is my sincere conviction that both the Communist Party and the Workers Party are devoid of what I consider the correct approach to the international working class.

When working together with the Stalinists for a few months an old "sympathizer" of the C. P. brought with him to one of our meetings a certain Leon Green. Although I had heard of Leon Green previously, this was the first time I had actually met him. At that meeting I was one of a committee of three selected to draw up a leaflet for distribution at the regular meeting of the Union protesting against the proposed increase in officers' salaries.

Anything Goes

In September the progressives not dominated by the Stalinists issued their first number of "Labor Truth" to 1,500 members of the Union. The Stalinists were in a quandary; they must break the growing influence of "Labor Truth"...

In October a meeting of some Stalinists and "sympathizers" was held at 1 Union Square, Sam Nesin, the Stalinist "leader" of a new fangled Stalinist "trade-union-committee" insisted that the "Trotskyist renegades" must be exposed and an "opposition" bulletin must be issued at once...

When Leon Green decided to join a group he made overtures to the "Trotskyist" faction; when he found he could not use them as a "stepping-stone" he went over to the "Stalinists" who were only too eager to accept him with open arms because together with them he was willing to issue a forged copy of "Labor Truth" slandering the "Trotskyists" instead of taking up the fight on vital issues pertaining to the local union.

aries" were not to be found. They were not seen or heard from; and if they were present at the meeting, they were probably hiding under the seats or in the balcony, reviewing the fight, while those whom they today attack as "Trotskyists" were always in the thick of the fight.

Now that a certain degree of democracy has been obtained by the rank and file through struggle against the corrupt officials the Stalinists want to rule the opposition. They want to rule regardless of their own competency. One cannot rule others by merely wishing to do so!

Not a Word on Union Matters

Surely from what I have witnessed the Stalinists lack all of these qualities. By their vulgar, short-sighted and narrow minded policies they have frightened away not only the conservative element, but the liberal and progressive as well.

On November 14, at a regular meeting of Local 3, two copies of "Labor Truth" were handed to the members as they entered the meeting; one by the progressives and the other—a forged copy—by the Stalinists.

Toledo WPA Is Organizing

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great response on the part of the WPA workers to the three-week old organizational campaign of the WPA Workers Union is conclusive proof that the WPA workers are anxious for organization and that a separate organizational form for them is vitally necessary to achieve numerical strength rapidly.

From the start the WPA Workers Union has moved decisively on the vital issues raised by the WPA workers themselves. By its aggressive attitude and the constant pressure it has exerted on the local WPA administration the union has already won major concessions for the WPA workers in Lucas County; all pay checks are now mailed direct to the workers' homes in place of the old system, where WPA workers would spend days waiting in line to receive their checks.

County-wide Drive for Conditions

The WPA Workers Union is mobilizing all resources and has requested the aid of the Lucas County Unemployed League, to which it is affiliated, to initiate a county-wide campaign aiming at forcing the local WPA administration to pay the full minimum monthly wage-scale with no deductions for any cause which the WPA worker is not responsible.

Quick Action Vital

With every passing week the union has grown weaker and the membership has become more terrorized. Other manufacturers in Toledo are already speaking of moving their plants to other unorganized cities, and it is becoming almost impossible to organize new men into the unions today as they fear the manufacturers will immediately move out of town.

The Progressive group of local 18384, realizing the danger which they are all facing, have already taken action at their last meeting to propose to the union a thirty minute stoppage in all plants in which they are organized, protesting the action of General Motors and arousing the Toledo auto workers to the necessity of immediately organizing all their forces to resist the union-busting campaign of the automobile manufacturers.

of the officers' salaries. At a subsequent meeting of the Stalinist "group" I protested most vehemently against the vulgar Stalinist procedure. I was then told that if I wanted to "get along with the Stalinists" I should join the Communist Party. I replied that I did not wish to prostitute myself.

It is necessary to bring out one more point: In the recent W. P. A. strike the Stalinists in the union were conspicuous with their absence; one of them, Frank Flatley, continued to work on W. P. A. for more than six weeks during the strike and stopped only one week before the settlement for fear that he would be called before the executive board of the Union and charged with scabbing.

Falsification and forgery is nothing new to Stalinism. When the workers of the world will have destroyed Stalinism—and the members of Local 3 will lead a hand-history will record the fact that falsification and forgery had received their deadliest blow...

NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

We don't like to boast of our house parties—you know what they're like. Don't cheat yourself out of a good time. Be there! Tuesday Night, December 31. 221 Second Avenue (Anspices, Branch 1)

THE MANAGER'S CORNER

Subscriptions are coming in but not at all fast enough to speak about it in enthusiastic terms. Our total to date is 223. We do not disparage, however, and have no reason to do so inasmuch as a couple of hundred new readers are always welcome.

Since our last report 59 new subscribers have been added and if the party convention date had not been changed slightly we would still be a good distance from our goal of 1,000 new subscribers.

The New York branches have by far the best record in this drive. Most of them should be able to reach their quota. But we still have a number of branches which have not yet gotten into motion or which have made only a very small beginning.

Among such branches, and those which have a large quota, the Allentown branch has not yet managed to send in a single new subscription. The San Francisco branch has sent in none; the Detroit, Toledo and Pittsburgh branches have sent in one new subscription each; the Newark branch has sent in two, the Boston branch three and the Minneapolis branch has sent in five.

If all of these branches which are still not in the running, and also those which have made only a small beginning, now speed up on their activities to get new subscribers, we will reach the goal set in this campaign.

Since our last report the new subscriptions received together with the quota of the various branches stand as follows:

Table with columns: City, Quota, Turned in. Lists various cities and their subscription status, including Akron, Allentown, Austin, Berkeley, Boston, Charleston, Chicago, Cleveland, Columbus, Davenport, Detroit, Dickinson, Fargo, High Point, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Mount Carmel, Newark, New Castle, New Haven, New York City, Northampton, Paterson, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Plentywood, St. Louis, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, San Diego, Springfield, Toledo, Utica, Washington, D.C., Williston, N. Dakota, Youngstown, Ohio, and Received from cities not listed above.

work relief. In several months they will undoubtedly be faced with the necessity of again fighting for direct relief. The Lucas County Unemployed League has had three years of experience in handling these problems and in organizing the unemployed.

Toledo Auto Workers Act

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only 1,400 men would be rehired, the executive committee stood by idly and allowed the union to be split by General Motors into "outsiders" and "insiders." As a result of these delays, the hesitation to act and the timidity of the executive committee, which should have provided the leadership in the battle, the union membership was allowed to become completely demoralized.

Two weeks ago the executive committee split under the pressure from the 900 men. A minority of three, headed by James Roland, chairman, recommended to the union membership strike action, and a majority of five, headed by Joseph Ditzel, S. P. member of the executive committee, recommended continued negotiations for another thirty days.

"That our support is asked in the sacred name of the League of Nations does not alter the situation, for the League, despite the adherence of Soviet Russia, is still what it has been since its formation, an instrument of the dominant imperialist powers against the weaker ones and an extremely effective means of once again hoodwinking the working class."

"We therefore refuse to be misled by the specious appeal to oppose Fascism, for we realize that wars between capitalist powers are not waged on account of forms of government, but for capitalist profit—and further we know that once war is declared, all British democratic governments will and must introduce the necessary means of crushing opposition and will thus become, for all practical purposes, Fascist governments. Actually the British government in India is of this type today."

"We know that Fascism is not some totally different political system, alien to British traditions, but that it is merely the name now popularly given to capitalist governments when under pressure of war or economic crisis, they can no longer govern by misrepresentation and ingenious falsehood under democratic forms but must resort to the prison, the concentration camp, and the machine gun. The record of the New Zealand government in the great war, as disclosed

in the late Mr. Holland's pamphlet, should dispel any illusions that may be held about New Zealand democracy.

"We, of course, sympathize with the exploited people of Abyssinia and strongly resent both the contemplated military attack by the Fascist government of Italy and the contemplated selling or dividing up of their country among British, American and other capitalist interests. We sympathize with them just as we do with the Indian frontier tribes, who are being bombed by our British Royal Air Force, but we definitely assert that the way to free the Abyssinians or the Mohammedan or Indian masses is not to participate with British or New Zealand governments in a peaceful cutting up of their territory or in its administration under the League of Nations or to take part in a national war against the Italian workers, our gallant allies' only a few years ago. Our duty is not to fight our foreign fellow-workers, but to call on all workers in all countries to resist their own exploiting and war-making governments with the object of obtaining political power for the working class, of instituting social ownership of the means of production, and thus in the only possible manner putting an end to wars by removing their causes."

Illinois Project Strike Postponed

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Police and sheriffs were already organized for strike-breaking activities and jobless workers who happened to be idle the morning following the conference were questioned. Secrecy as to the definite time the strike will be called still has the politicians and WPA officials jittery. On many projects workers report that there is a let-up in the slave-driving tactics used by the bosses. Discharged WPA workers are also being placed back to work.

Pledges Support of P.M.A. Local

Jack Battuello, president of local union 1, Progressive Miners of America, in a fiery address, pledged the support of his local union in the fight of the I.W.A. against the "coolie wage."



