

THE REBEL - 60c a year.
In Clubs of four or more
-40 weeks, 25c each.

Entered as second-class matter July 1, 1911, at the postoffice at Hallettsville, Tex., under act of Mar. 3, 1879.

THE GREAT AFFAIR GREAT TO US ONLY BECAUSE WE ARE ON OUR KNEES - LET US ARISE.

HALLETTSVILLE, TEXAS, SATURDAY, JUNE 5, 1915. L. E.

T. HICKY, Editor and Owner
50c per year; clubs of four or more 20c each.
If this Number is opposite your name your subscription expires next issue.

203

No. 202

Roots of the Cancer are the Cancer Roots

No man will deny that while there is an open war raging in Europe there is a more or less open war raging in the United States—the war between capital and labor.

From the big fields of California to the mills of Massachusetts, from the mines of Michigan and Texas to the farms of Texas and Oklahoma, the irrepressible conflict rages. Inasmuch as the Rebel has definitely lined up with the labor side of the fight we deem it our duty from week to week to point out the strategic position of the foe, and who and where is the enemy both hidden and open. It is in line with this objective we have drawn as much upon the policy of laboring men as comes from the control of the mining zone. In this article we shall descend upon another enemy who poses as one of labor's staunch friends, none less than the Chambers of Commerce of various cities of the South.

A Chamber of Commerce is a body of business men who usually in their own hall or building to discuss trade and means of fattening their pocket books. It is the most powerful of the organizations in which they live and have their being. Its chairman is usually a senator; its executive committee is always made up of the biggest grafters of the city, particularly those who accumulate the most of the franchises for public utilities, gas, electric lights, gas, water, street cars, and other necessities. This executive committee invariably has a real estate agent and landlord or two of the largest type to be found in the city, and they latter, on the increased investment that comes to them from the growth of population, hence they are always ready to deal themselves with badges, usually with one word on it, "Booster," and their logos are such as "A 100,000 in 1899," "Give Us More Dollars," "We Want More Franchise," "Let the City Grow," etc.

The president of the Chamber of Commerce and the executive committee are, with scarcely an exception, the Warville bloods of the city. They are the mayor. They play a quiet, but nevertheless leading role in all elections, but they specialize upon the municipal and county elections. While taking much interest in state and national elections, as a general rule they rather shun a mayor of a city than a governor of a state, for the reason that in the city there are a thousand-and-one forms of graft, such as the depositing of public funds, the location of public buildings, the selling of land for parks, the opening of different other forms of "booniest graft" that immediately flows into their pockets.

Next to the president and executive board of the chamber of commerce come the business men who are seeking to climb into power and place by one form of business graft or another their interests. They are mostly retail merchants, advertising agents, doctors, lawyers, and other professional men. If the record shows that there has ever been a skilled mechanic, a railroad engineer, a miner or a farmer who makes his living by honest means, or an industrial laborer, in the membership of the Chambers of Commerce we have never heard of it.

As the big and little capitalists invariably follow the lines of their own interests, and as they have no "in" to resist in the competitive race, they have the lowest possible price for his services, the have always found that they are, as an organization, the hottest enemies of labor, whether organized or unorganized. In this connection it will be recalled that when the Citizen's Alliance sprung into existence all over the United States a few years ago they had their source in the Chambers of Commerce.

In fact the record shows these Chambers of Commerce were the recruiting stations for that now openly diversified organization.

It is always the policy of a Chamber of Commerce to control the newspapers of the town in which it is chartered, and to run an independent paper, it is inevitably boycotted by a secret abuse. The Chamber of Commerce is the archvillain of the so-called public press.

Let's be specific:

In the year 1911 the exploited wage slaves of the Oklahoma City street railway company, in the fond belief that they lived in a free country, and had a constitutional right to organize for the betterment of their conditions, did so, and made certain demands, such as the reduction of hours, such as a few cents an hour increase in pay. The union leaders were spied on and blacklisted, their brothers supported them and

the strike was on, and organized labor of Oklahoma City stood behind them to a man. Some time previous to the striking Post, who recently misquoted, delivered an editorial address to the members of the Chamber of Commerce. Filled with the Post labor-baiting spirit the Chamber of Commerce met in secret session the day that the strike was declared, and strong resolutions endorsing the strike were adopted and endorsing the stand of the private grafters who owned the great public utilities.

After the strike had lasted some ten days, and the post had maintained a most peaceful attitude in spite of the attempts of the companies to create violence, the Chamber of Commerce held a secret midnight meeting and unanimously resolved to present in a body the high roads on the buildings on South Avenue and Main Street at 2 a. m. the next morning, each man armed with a sawed-off shotgun and from that vantage point to shoot the innocent of that street car strike who would dare show himself at that hour when the cars were about to be operated by night. This characteristic Chamber of Commerce move, though thoroughly antagonistic as it was, resulted in the breaking of the street car strike. This was made possible by the Daily Oklahoman turning loose its hot batteries upon the defendants strikers and approving all sorts of the violence conducted by the Chamber of Commerce, but of the street car company's imported thugs. An evening paper that took the side of the strikers was boycotted by the Chamber of Commerce just out of existence.

Let's cite another instance:

During the Christmas holidays of 1912 the department store owners who had bandied together since a reduction of newspaper advertising rates, met in conference with the business managers of the Daily Oklahoman. They demanded a reduction in rates of ten per cent, and the Oklahoman demanded an increase of ten per cent. After a ten day deadlock both sides stood firm with the result that on December 21 the Oklahoman went to print at midnight without the copy of every important advertiser of Oklahoma City.

When the editors of Oklahoma City arose on New Year's Day and found the Oklahoman cut to 10 pages and the advertising copy they were astonished, but when they read the front-page head, cut double-headed with 72-point letter head in which both the head and the body of the article breathe the different distance to the advertisers, the people fairly seared. Once the second day, and then in the second front page space in the same makeup, as unbalancing as a black hawk in a Oklahoma City dive, the editor of the Oklahoman found a surprised public that the Oklahoman had refused page after page of advertising from mail order houses of Kansas City and Chicago and thereby enabled the merchants to take from their customers not only in Oklahoma City, but in the state where the Oklahoman circulated hundreds of thousands of dollars in profits for each in excess of what the mail order houses would charge. And then he told them they were showing a marvellous amount of ingratitude when they did not return a small part of these profits in the shape of the increase he demanded and submitted to the rest of the city. The result was a contract with foreign mail order houses. The Rebel would ask: Was there ever such a case of one thief so publicly demanding of other thieves his share of the spoil? Then he warned them to look out for what was coming the third day. This second alert spread consternation through the Chamber of Commerce crowd who were mostly advertisers, and with fear and trembling they waited for the third day.

On January 3, 1913, the Rebel fired again from the front page and sure enough the Rebel told it. Almost before their heads could get the news of the Rebel said the editor of the Oklahoman: "You may not be aware of it, but I have, in my opinion, the most important information that you have received. I learn from the investors that the Rebel of clothes that you are selling in Oklahoma City and by mail order throughout the state, for \$25, cost you from \$10 to \$12.50, and sells that you are selling at \$20, you buy from \$8 to \$9. I shall in the next few days, publish from day to day these invoices, the prices at which the goods were sold and the names of the Oklahoma City merchants that sold them."

This was the opening up of the whole business of the Rebel. The Rebel of clothes that you are selling in Oklahoma City and by mail order throughout the state, for \$25, cost you from \$10 to \$12.50, and sells that you are selling at \$20, you buy from \$8 to \$9. I shall in the next few days, publish from day to day these invoices, the prices at which the goods were sold and the names of the Oklahoma City merchants that sold them."

Oklahoma demanded, because if such publicity occurred, their false pretenses of good reputation would be shown up by graft uncovered and hence their occupation gone.

It was the Chamber of Commerce of Bay City, Texas, a town of about 2000, that threatened to boycott the delivery of credit the men who sought to be elected by the governor and the Red Cross, when the city was under water last year and did not get the ground that it would "interfere with business"—in other words northern merchants would not be doing in and trimmed and skinned to the bone and homeless wanderers. The Bay City Tribune sided with the work of suppressing facts.

It was the Houston Chamber of Commerce, when the shipmen went on strike in Houston 1100 strong, the Houston Chronicle, that met in regular session, officially denounced the men, told them that if they did not go back to work they would cut off their supplies, and then welcomed the seals to their grip on the Houston Chronicle.

It was the Chamber of Commerce of Dallas, Texas, that compelled that sheet to turn down the story that would have the strike for the men, that of which the Rebel was a victim. It was blown up, and 26 1/2 inches long. Just think of turning down the biggest story of the year and the editor of this paper knows what is in talking about being dug up the facts and handed them free of charge to the Chronicle and the Houston Chronicle, came to Hallettsville and wrote the story for The Rebel. Forty days later the United States government boiler inspectors placed their O. K.'s on the accuracy of the story.

In another column we show the attempt of the San Antonio business grafters, organized in the Chamber of Commerce to muzzle The Express on the fact that had already been sent out by the United States government. The Chamber of Commerce unanimously sent a committee to seek all talk of freight and sanitary conditions relating to the Mexican quarter of that city. Dr. Ernest A. Sweet, the surgeon of the United States health service, assigned to report on the conditions, shows vividly in the Houston Post of May 1914 the reason for the action of the Chamber of Commerce. We quote from the Post article:

"Attention is called to the fact that the normal is a very profitable investment, one such capital representing an investment of \$5000 brought to the owner, according to his own statement, a monthly income from \$250 to \$280. Dr. Ernest Sweet, 'And yet we wonder why these miserable people who are forced to live in such structures have a tuberculosis death rate of 60.7 per 100,000. That such freight housing conditions should exist in one of the principal tourist cities of the country, a city which has many natural advantages and where there is ample room for all, is all the more to be wondered at.'

Just think of getting \$280 a month in a year out of an investment that is returned full in the first three months! What do these landlords and the Chamber of Commerce care for the freight apartment of tuberculosis caused by the crowding in their unsanitary rooms, so that the natives of the most salubrious of the United States are crowded in the very city in which people come from all over the country to cure this very disease. They care no more than do their brother landlords on the farms who exploit through rack-rents and usury the millions of American people off the main part of the country for which they are allowed to till and live in houses that are disgraceful as the cesspools of San Antonio. They are alike with the farm landlords, in trying out against any attempt to expose the black conditions for which their greed is responsible. It is the Chambers of Commerce in Puebla, La Jolla, Walsenburg and Trinidad, with their muzzled papers, enable the Rockefeller family to place the mine guards in the mines of Colorado, to place the mine guards and boys on top of the pits and literally burn women and children to death in the mine at Indio. Then through a Chamber of Commerce packed jury they convict a union leader for murder of a mine guard, although he was not near the scene and whose only crime was that he was loyal to his class. It is as true as holy writ that it is the Chambers of Commerce of Colorado that have handed down the American flag

by debauching the courts, corrupting the legislature and the courts, purchasing the military arm of the government and prostituting the executive office. Not only have they committed these crimes, but their combined influence is strong enough to keep Rockefeller, Sr., and Jr., from being indicted and extradited for their crimes in Colorado and hung by their necks until they are dead.

I could trace throughout the nation, from the metropolis of New York down to the smallest isolated town that has a Chamber of Commerce, I could show the blackbanded methods of these organized thieves to be practically the same as I have here traced close to home. Therefore I will close this story by telling of the Chamber of Commerce of Dallas and the inevitable newspaper courtship. The Dallas News, the Semi-Weekly Park News and the Evening Journal—Dallas' best publications, with a pink-whiskered Italian blackguard named Lemarchi in command.

A little digression from the straight path of my story for a moment. Four years ago looking one month. The Rebel was in the midst of a policy of the world's battle while, lashed for the freedom of the lands of the South, which, as a matter of course, would entail the destruction of landlordism. As the Rebel's position was born, four conventions through the United States of America, that were growing so splendidly, developed out of that original organization.

We arrive in the largest political rally in the history of the United States, where nation-wide and the publicity department of the University of Wisconsin said to be placed on our mailing list.

With the birth of the Commission on Industrial Relations the university authorities called attention to the work of The Rebel in Texas and cited conditions as we told them, then in Texas, W. C. Hoffman, formerly associate editor of The Farm & Ranch, visited our office and went through three years of our files and through the records of the Farmers Union from its birth. As a result of Mr. Hoffman's report, the Commission decided to visit Dallas and hold public hearings at Dallas on the land situation.

Considering the shortness of time, the hearing was a most remarkable success in point of personnel of witnesses and breadth of testimony adduced, of possibly any ever heard in the United States in the same period. The farmers, college professors, Land League officials, former Renters Union officials, Farmers Union officials, bankers, landlords, actual farmers, tenants all appeared, and when the hearing ended, such a floodlight of publicity descended on the land situation, the like of which was not known in the memory of the oldest inhabitant.

This is the first time in the history of America that the United States government had officially investigated the all-important question of landlordism, and to the Socialist party of Texas, the Land League and the Rebel is granted the distinction of having accomplished the feat.

As the lid was lifted from landlord conditions in Texas and Oklahoma, cries of rage, anger and consternation went up from the land-grabbers and their mutual press. Walls of anguish emanated through the editorial columns of the Chambers of Commerce agents, led by the Gal.-Dal. News, and followed in turn by The Chronicle, The Post, Fort Worth Telegram and Record, Dallas Times Herald, The Republic Express and Light and the Fort Worth daily in the state, all warning the collar of the C. O.

To thoroughly expose their hatred of those who had turned on the light, the Chamber of Commerce and the Rebel is granted the distinction of having accomplished the feat.

The Dallas News seized upon the resolutions of the Chamber of Commerce, gave them the fullest publicity. The Rebel, in the editorial columns, is telling the government's own confederates whose also laud the literary lauders were not fit to be. But also for the Dal.-Gal. the vast majority of the actual farmers of

