

Employers Overawed by Their Own Frankenstein Reared In Giant Government Bureaucracy

By JAY LOVESTONE.

Our powerful employers seem to be somewhat panicky over the rapid rise in the governmental bureaucracy. Many of them who are the most ardent advocates of organized repression of the workers are beginning to fear that they have reared a Frankenstein in the whole government machinery.

With the capitalists, sentiment and opinion very often follow the dollar sign. It may be good and well to build up and employ big governmental agencies for holding down the lid as far as the workers are concerned and breaking strikes, but every once in a while, the capitalists are haunted by this contradiction: They must have giant machinery set up for guaranteeing investments abroad and the law and order of profits at home, but they hate like Cain to pay for it.

Menace of Public Payroll.

According to the National Industrial Conference Board, using the 1920 Census figures, the annual public salary bill alone amounts to nearly \$4,000,000,000.

This reactionary employers' organization has also found that one person out of every dozen over sixteen years gainfully employed is on the government payroll. This huge bill must be met and the taxation burden is becoming unbearable to our investing class. In view of the disturbed world economic conditions the employing class is particularly anxious to prevent such costly leaks in the financial order. Politically our employing class feels that it must have a giant huge governmental apparatus; economically the bosses are beginning to groan under the growing load of onerous taxes that must be levied to meet the expenses thus incurred.

Exclusive of pensioners, there are on the national, state, and municipal payrolls over 2,700,000 employees. These "workers," in the main unproductive in so far as the economic process in itself is concerned, receive approximately \$3,500,000,000 annually in wages. Then there are the pensioners and other totally inactive persons numbering 670,000 who draw an annual pay of \$820,000,000. Totaling the active and inactive government employees we have a payroll of close to 3,400,000.

Employees Disturbed.

The National Industrial Conference Board, serving as a high grade clearing house of public information for some of our biggest financial and industrial interests then throws out this significant hint: "The query arises whether governmental agencies in this country have not over-extended themselves." The remedy vaguely suggested by these solons of finance and industry is the same old humbug of retrenchment and the avoidance of duplication. But these experts know better than to rely on such hopeless empty panaceas.

The slogans of retrenchment and efficiency in government have been the food of the loudest flannel-mouthed liberal saviors in the country for many years. Such talk has been the perennial balderdash of our municipal, state, and national election campaigns. What is more, despite the curtailment of the federal payroll since the conclusion of the war, the roster of national executive employees under civil service regula-

tion has been rising rapidly. Exclusive of military and naval employees there are today twice as many persons on the federal payroll than there were twenty years ago. Computing the steady rise of the federal civilian payroll one finds that in the last hundred years this group increased over 6,000%.

The yearly cost of all governmental salaries amounts to \$91.00 per capita of those ten years of age who are gainfully employed. On the per capita basis of the whole population every man, woman and child pays \$34.00 annually to meet only the wage bill of the government employees.

In the ratio of increase the municipal payroll is not far behind the federal. From 1918 to 1921 the municipal indebtedness of over two hundred cities has increased 71%.

All in all we spend every year 14% of the total annual national income on government in this country. Every family pays \$400 a year for running the government.

Between Devil and Deep Blue.

Here we have it. The capitalists are in a tight fix. They are between the devil and the deep blue. They are vised in between the jaw of political necessity and the jaw of economic difficulty. This contradiction and all its attendant anti-social consequences arises from a far more fundamental contradiction in capitalism. This contradiction arises from the contradiction inherent in the capitalist system of production and exchange itself. While our system of production and exchange is becoming ever more socialized, our system of distribution continues to be individualistic. Here we have the economic basis of our class conflicts in society today.

And as a result of these class conflicts and their consequent dangers to private property the state machinery must of necessity continually assume new functions to insure the security of the present order. Thus there arises the gigantic governmental bureaucracy, not always engaged in directly suppressive efforts against the workers, but whether serving as the policemen or the nursemaids, functioning primarily for the maintenance of the present class relationships and status quo in the property system.

In time, this giant governmental machinery becomes a fetter on the whole social order. We need but cite the case of Austria and some of the Balkan states where the employing class found it necessary to maintain such a large army of soldiers and other public employees to insure its own brand of social stability that the

drift to complete economic bankruptcy was taking on the character of a headlong drive to chaos. In the case of Austria the League of Nations and our own Mr. J. P. Morgan came in and made coolies out of the Austrian masses and thus temporarily saved Austria for capitalism.

Danger to the Workers.

There is unquestionably a terrific danger to the workers in the continuous increase of centralized power in the hands of the reactionary employing class state. But there is another menace to the workers in this situation. This danger is very often lost sight of because of the hold some weak-kneed so-called progressives have on the working masses. Many liberals and capitalist reform demagogues are lining up workers and farmers for their program of so-called economy in government. Thus the fundamental class character of the problem is lost sight of and the workers' attention is diverted to inconsequential.

In practice this economy is translated by the employers in slashing the budgets of those governmental departments which are engaged in the activities least detrimental to the masses. The whole history of the developments of the various governmental departments shows very clearly that such departments, as the Department of Justice, engaged mainly in hounding workers and breaking strikes are never sufferers of these retrenchment schemes. On the other hand, it is the social relief and educational agencies that have suffered from every one of these fits of economy.

For the workers there is but one way out of this dilemma of capitalism. The workers and farmers must set up a government of their own, a proletarian dictatorship, to supplant the present employing class dictatorship. With the abolition of the present system of economic classes and exploitation of those who work by those who own the present need for giant governmental bureaucracies to protect the employers against the workers will be removed.

Then only will these billions of dollars produced by the workers be saved for socially constructive use.

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