

# R. W. Beattie, Labor Spy-Faker

By Wm. Z. Foster

AT last "Bob" Beattie, prominent labor official of Pittsburgh, Pa., has been exposed in his true light as an agent of the employers. For many years it has been common gossip in the Pittsburgh labor movement that Beattie was a spy and a crook. He has been connected with every shady deal that has been pulled off in the local movement. It is typical that in spite of the fact that there was every indication of his being a detective, the trade union officialdom of both his own international union and the American Federation of Labor made absolutely no effort to expose him. He was finally turned up by agents of the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and shown to be a detective in the employ of the Central Industrial Service Bureau.

Beattie held official positions galore, most of which he still holds even after his exposure. He was business agent of the local organization of Firemen and oilers. He was Vice-President of the International Union of Firemen and Oilers, as well as editor of its official journal. In addition he was Secretary of the Pittsburgh Central Labor Union and President of the local labor bank. Of a suave and ingratiating personality, Beattie lost no opportunity to worm himself into every possible strategic position, there to ply his nefarious trade of spying and grafting upon the workers.

When the big steel campaign was on, Beattie was commissioned to represent his International Union on the National Committee for organizing the steel workers. At that time all those of us connected with the campaign who could see an inch before their noses, knew that Beattie was corrupt. He was then local business agent, and, although having but a handful of members in his local union, he was able to sport a big touring car and to live upon the fat of the land. Several times when the committee was about to hold important meetings, I protested against his being present and demanded that some other representative of the International be sent.

No doubt Tim Healy, President of the International Union of Stationary Firemen and Oilers, knew, or was practically certain, that Beattie was a detective. But, as usual in such cases, he did nothing to expose him. Beattie, like all other crooks in the labor movement, was an ardent supporter of Sam Gompers

and a fighter against "Reds." He was deeply entrenched in the local bureaucratic machine which keeps the district safe for Gompers, and any attack upon him was bound to develop a big opposition from the whole Gompers crowd.

In many cities the local labor movements are corrupt to the point of being a standing disgrace. But nowhere is the situation worse than in Pittsburgh. Formerly the local central body was known as the Iron City Trades Council. But it was so rotten that, in order to get at least partially away from its evil repute, the name was changed to the present title of the Pittsburgh Central Labor Union. In almost all the crooked deals pulled off in the Pittsburgh central body, Beattie was a leading figure.

One of these jobs which stunk to the high heavens was the endorsement of Babcock for mayor of Pittsburgh. Babcock was a Republican with large timber interests in the south. These were operated under one of the worst peonage systems in the entire country, all of which had been fully exposed by Babcock's enemies. He was shown to be the most ruthless kind of labor exploiter. Nevertheless, Beattie and his crowd jammed a resolution through the central body endorsing him, just as the meeting was breaking up. The few who heard the resolution read at all understood it to be a condemnation of Babcock. Imagine the surprise of the whole labor movement when the next day all Pittsburgh was plastered over with great posters carrying a 100% endorsement of Babcock by the Iron City Trades Council and signed by all the unions affiliated to that organization.

It was a matter of common knowledge that for this job Babcock paid \$7,500, which was split among five men, one of whom was Beattie. Indeed, the honest delegates of the council appointed a committee to investigate the corrupt deal. This committee monkeyed along for several years, but, faced by the opposition of the entire Gompers machine, never did anything definite. A couple of years later it was found out that Babcock owned 55% of the stock of the National Labor Journal, the corrupt labor sheet parading itself as official organ of the local central body.

Another outstanding scandal of the many disgusting scandals in the Pittsburgh labor

movement, relates to the Labor Temple. A number of years ago local labor determined to have a home of its own and arranged to purchase a big building. In order to raise funds, some of the labor fakers, including Beattie, were instructed to solicit money from the unions and employers. In a short while almost enough was raised to pay for the building. Everybody breathed a sigh of relief and thought that at last labor had a location of its own. But, alas, the gang in charge of the collection of funds submitted their bill. This

completely wiped out all the money collected, to the disgust of the labor movement.

Not satisfied with this raw graft, the same gang repeated the proposition. It is said that the workers of Pittsburgh have paid for the Labor Temple three times over, yet today they hardly own a dollar's worth of it. They will welcome the exposure of Beattie. But he is only one flea gone from the dog's back. There are more of them, some even worse than he. Gompers and his crowd know of their existence, but naturally, they will not do anything to undermine their own support.

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