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I'm Fed Up with Union Bossism

George Bronner

as told to Charles Hull Wolfe

For the first time in a national journal, a rank and file member of UAW-CIO sounds off against the tyranny and socialism of a monopolistic union.

TO MOST Americans, organized labor may sound like one huge chorus singing in unison. But as an insider, a union card-holder for 31 years, I say: No, it's not a chorus — it's more apt to be a solo of a single union boss.

Consulting only with the other union big shots, and often turning a deaf ear to ordinary members, the head man decides on "labor's viewpoint," then tells it to the world. Standing silently behind him are the union rank and file. Many resent what the labor boss says and does. But their protest is seldom heard. They are men without voices, hidden behind a kind of Iron Curtain — a fear of ostracism, of firing, or even of bodily harm, if they speak out what they really think.

I know what's happened to me when I've stood up in union meetings to object to dictatorial methods. Henchmen in cahoots with the leaders booed me down with

shouts of "Shud up! Ya don't know whatcha talkin' about!"

And after I've sounded off in public against what I considered to be UAW-CIO mistakes, I know the dirty looks and words some of my fellow unionists have hurled at me.

I also know what happened to a friend of mine, a fellow I grew up with and went to school with. Like myself, he joined UAW-CIO, and after World War II got fed up with paying heavy dues but having no voice as to how they were spent.

When the union wouldn't listen, he wrote his local Grand Rapids paper objecting to UAW-CIO's undemocratic procedures:

We just fought a war against dictatorship. But why did we spend all our efforts abroad when we've got so much dictatorship at home — right in our own labor unions?

UAW-CIO suspended him from membership. The reason? He was "anti-union," they said.

Mr. Wolfe is a member of the staff of the Foundation for Economic Education.