GOAL OF TAFT BILL
Open Shop, No Raises, No Unions

The war-time alliance between the labor-fakers and the employers received rude shock when Congress passed the Taft-Hartley bill over President Truman's veto. During the war the capitalists were willing to keep the labor skates in some kind of order, provided the union movement as such was kept in the harnes. To that end they agreed with Green-Murray and the Stalinist stooges to a "no-strike" pledge in return for maintaining certain controls. Thus, instead of a policy of struggle which would have netted billions in raises and have helped organize the whole working class, instead of only 30% of it, the conservative leaders of the trade union movement made a deal which they thought would be maintained in the post-war period.

Capitalism, however, is getting ready for the post-war slump. It intends to lower wage rates to pre-war levels and below as soon as the pool of unemployed becomes large enough. The new "labor" act gives them all the weapons needed.

Originally the National Labor Relations Act was passed off as a great boom to organized labor. The FIGHTING WORKER pointed out at the time that the act was merely a legal recognition of what the workers had already gained in the course of hundreds of militant strikes at the time and that it was an attempt to channelize union activity into legal hearings and court battles. It was all part of the Roosevelt plan for tying the working class to the capitalist war chariot.

RWL PROVEN CORRECT

Experience has proven that the Revolutionary Workers League was correct in its analysis. While the workers fought on picket lines and used the sidestrack strike the Labor Board's rulings were liberal. As soon as strike action waned, and particularly after the sidetrack tactics were given up, the Board rulings became more and more hostile to labor. The only value of the Labor Board was in cases where a strike was defeated. In recent instances it was possible to use the Board as a retreat instrument to gain some compromises and reinstatement of strikers.

The Labor Board at best was of some slight value only in cases of retreat and as defensive instrument. In the total picture it hurt labor rather than aided it because it sowed illusions of depending on the government, and its long arduous delays and red tape killed more union drives than it made.

Now, with the Taft-Hartley bill, the Labor Board will unmask and present its true face as the open agent of the capitalists—something it has hidden in the past. Now it will be an instrument of offense against the working class. The act legalizes injunctions against Unions. It forces unions to go through long mediation procedure and it provides for some cooling off periods. In case of big national strikes it throws the kinks into strike action for almost three months, during which time the employers can undermine the union and prepare strike-breaking measures. Under the bill unions can have their treasuries depleted by hundreds of law suits; companies can refuse to bargain with a union they have a contract with and the union will be enjoined from striking while the company will be permitted, its refusal to bargain until the Labor Board and probably the court act.

THought Control

For the first time in American history a legal instrument is created which penalizes people for what they think, rather than what they do. People who believe in force or violence can not represent unions, even though elected by their membership. Up until now, only in Japan was there any attempt at "democracy controlled." Now the U. S. adopts the same fascist techniques, in addition to all the other reprisals that exist against those fearsome militants who fight capitalism.

The Taft-Hartley Bill is the 1947 form of the open-shop campaign of 1920-28. After the first war management and government ganged up on Labor by openly collaborating on an open-shop campaign. The U. S. attorney general boasted that he would keep America on open-shop country. His injunctions against labor made history. Now we can expect the same thing. The Labor Board now has the power to give injunctions against workers for almost anything. Their rights to bargain and fight are all tied up with the capitalist government. As in the 1929 days so today we can expect millions of workers to be lost to the labor movement—unless a vigorous campaign of strike protests develops.

The day after the bill went through over 100,000 miners went out on strike. If the number of those workers is built to millions it will make the Wall Street prostitutes hostile long before they try, to implement the bill with harsh interpretations.

PROGRESSIVES SHOULD UNITE

Truman's veto should fool no one. Truman merely reacted more sensitively to the pressure of the working class than Taft and Company. But it must be remembered that when the railroad workers and the coal workers went on strike in 1945 Truman openly proposed drafting them and even more vicious anti-labor legislation than the present.

In the last analysis the workers can neither place any reliance on capitalist politicians nor on their present class-collaboration leadership to help them out of the present difficulty. It is only because of the treacherous alliance of the labor
Goldblatt Workers Learn Right to Organize is a Fiction

Much to-do has been made about the legal right of labor to organize. Actually that right is a fiction not only now, after the Taft Bill, but even under the previous Wagner Act. The overwhelming majority of those workers who are now unionized have only permit the Union to file cases in which they are afraid of being fired. Despite the Wagner Act the experience of all employees is that they have no protection except their own strength.

The case of the employees of Goldblatt Bros. in Chicago is probably one of the best examples in recent years of how the "legal" rights are completely nullified. During an 8 month organizational drive by Building Service Local 231 AFL, a few dozen members were fired for belonging to the Union. Most of them were so fearful it would be a blot on their record, that they refused to even permit the Union to file cases with the National Labor Relations Board. Of the 11 cases that were filed, the Board -- after about a year of litigation -- finally decided only one in the Union's favor. In the others it was claimed that there wasn't "adequate" proof, although the Company's violent anti-union behavior is well-known.

After organizing was completed, when the AFL Teamster leaders refused to continue support of the store worker's picket line, the Company sent around a petition throughout its ten stores. Workers were instructed by their supervisors to either sign or get out. The petition stated that they do not wish to belong to the Union and that if they previously had signed application cards they hereby revoke same.

"YELLOW DOG" PETITION

The reign of terror was so great that in the main Goldblatt store only 42 out of approximately 1,000 failed to sign the petition.

although the Union has approximately 700 members there. Those forty-two are now being weeded down at the rate of five or six each week. A Company supervisor openly admitted to one of the discharged men that he was being fired for refusing to sign the petition.

Some of the discharges will no doubt be taken up before the Board, but nothing will come of it. In each case the Company arms itself with some excuse which will cover itself legally. In some instances it is claimed that the job itself has been done away with because of some reorganization; in the meantime, however, dozens of new workers are being hired for the same general type of work. In another case the Company claims that there has been a slight increase in its division of some rule. And so on. Even if the cases are won before the Labor Board the Company is merely assessed a difference between what the employee earned at another job and what he might have earned if he had continued at Goldblatt's. In most cases that would be nothing or only a few dollars. In the meantime, however, the discharges have had their desired effect. They make the workers fearful of joining.

No legal hocus-pocus can guarantee for the working class what it can not gain by independent class action. The real strength of labor still lies in its ability to hinder plant operations by its picket lines. Failure of the Goldblatt workers to win the strike means they will suffer the same forms of intimidation and discrimination for years to come, until either the organizational effort ends or until the Company makes some kind of deal with an unscrupulous labor leader for a weak contract and for a Union that will, for all practical purposes, be run by the Company. The Wagner Act will gain for the workers nothing but discharges and humiliation — and no protection worthy of the name.

OLD TAR IN CHICAGO'S NEW BARRELS

The great metropolis of the midwest, Chicago, is now living in a "new era". With the new Mayor, Marián Kennelly, has come a new broom. Checks at City Hall are now expected to come in at 9 A. M. and to work. Three hundred "surplus" laborers have been laid off at a saving of a million dollars. Plans are in the hopper for fixing roads, building houses, and everything else.

In an effort to show that there will be no cheap politics in his administration Kennelly is appointing businessmen to key posts. Investors, bankers, heads of theack and household companies and the like head the school board and the civil service board. Other business cronies of the good mayor, himself a packhouse capitalist, will certainly be appointed to other jobs.

Many people are suffering from the illusion that all this is an improvement over the old Kelly graft-ridden political machine. They seem to think that big business will do more for the common man than the packhorses in the political machinery.

Actually Kennelly is trying to put some efficiency into the city government for a number of purposes — cut down taxes, build popular support, strengthen the present business firms (by better roads, less taxes, etc.) and attract others. The main questions of the day will come up later, the questions affecting Kennelly's relations with workers — home relief, police activity in strikes. LOW COST hoisting (everybody is for housing, of course, but at what prices?) and other class problems.

All's not gold that glitters: and "businessman" Kennelly may shine like a friend of the people, but life will prove that he hasn't stepped out of his class one bit: he's still the exclusive friend of the rich.

GOAL OF TAFT BILL

(Continued from Page 1)

"A MARKIAN CRITIQUE"

By SID OKUN

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The Marshall Plan to “Save Europe”

Saving Europe from Revolution, and for the almighty dollar, is now to take on a more planned basis. As the old bond sales aid that the United States has been giving in the form of UNRRA, credits, and lately the world monetary bank. Secretary of State Marshall has presented a comprehensive plan for the “rehabilitation” of Europe which will call for expenditures of $6 billions a year by the Wall Street government in return for political hegemony within Western Europe at least.

Despite all the lend-lease and other aid of recent years Europe just can’t seem to get on its feet. Food is short and hungry workers cannot produce adequately. Without sufficient government help the old plants destroyed during the war are not being replaced in quick enough time. The world bank can’t help out much because its charter provides that it can’t make any loans except for specific projects, and then it must have enough security so that it can be pretty sure that it will get the money back. The dollar credits given by the U. S. to Italy, France, England and other countries were only stopgaps and were used up for quick relief measures and other short-term prospects.

“UNITED STATES OF EUROPE”

The Marshall plan, on the other hand, hopes to establish a longer period of stability. The nations of Europe would be expected to form a virtual “United States of Europe”. If a customs union is not established, at least the nations are expected to eliminate trade barriers, thus making it possible to produce more cheaply and to buy materials and finished goods at the point where they are most economically — and cheaply — produced. In return the United States will set up a dollar pool and will give what is euphemistically called “technical assistance”, but what is in reality some measure of both economic and political control over the nation.

Nationalists would be permitted to borrow good American dollars from the pool. In return they would deposit with the United States the equivalent in gold or gold bullion or a substitute of equal value, which would be used for a specified number of years — if at all. Thus the nations of Europe would be able to purchase, on a long-term basis, the machinery and equipment now in return for a doubtful promise to pay back in raw materials later.

The European countries would also have to introduce a sort of enlarged planning board which would allocate materials and plan increased production, very much as the War Production Board did in wartime.

On the face of it this scheme seems as if America is building up competitors. Actually Uncle Sam recognizes that unless it rebuilds the European economy to a tolerable point there won’t be any capitalist system at all. If the system of capitalist scarcity is to exist at all it can only do so on the basis of a “planned scarcity”, where at least some of the bugs in capitalist anarchy can be worked out.

The plan will introduce a long-term political control by the United States of the fate of Western Europe at least. American dollars, “technical advisors”, and coassert political control will make of this nation of the world exactly what Latin America is today — a vast American-controlled sphere of influence. It will serve to consolidate this control against the inevitable military conflict with the Soviet Union. Above all, the stability introduced and the higher productive levels, it is hoped will stave off Revolution at least for a few years.

U. S. “RECESSION”

Unfortunately the plan has a few “bugs” in it. The first and foremost, of course, is the fact that the evils of overproduction are already growing at American economy itself. Should a sustained recession develop here it will make America’s position that much more difficult and will bring the rest of the Capitalist house down regardless of the Marshall plan. Secondly, the plan will create an increase in the debt not only of the United States but of the European countries as well. Even though French francs, or Italian lire, are “British” or “United States” dollars, they nevertheless form part of a book-keeping debt which will make devaluation of currency inevitable sooner or later. Such devaluation is impossible under the current system of living standards of the masses, a step which would defeat the “class peace” of the Marshall plan and make conditions beyond the abyssmal present living standards in Europe.

Like Hitler’s oast mark system this plan offers a temporary shot in the arm to European capitalism. But precisely as Europe begins to recover it will find itself saddled with even greater evil of overproduction evils. New plants, new rationalization, new production techniques under capitalism bring with them an increased need for new markets to take up the increased production and productivity and the small share of production that labor receives in wages. With the profit system in force the Marshall plan of rehabilitation can only lead, in the long run, to a greater world-wide depression and a more violent clash between the powers for world markets.

CAPITALISTIC CONTRADICTIONS

America itself is already showing that it cannot live up to its own laws. It has promulgated the theory of “free trade for the post-war world.” Because of its superior production facilities the U. S. can underwrite most capitalist countries in most things. But in such commodities as wool, for instance, U. S. production is hopelessly behind Australian. As a result Congress has decided to place restrictions on Australian wool and to grant a subsidy to the American producers. Australia may very well be hurted into a depression by such a policy. Certainly she will have to set up barriers against U. S. exports. Thus the “free trade” system must inevitably break down.

The U. S. simply is in an inescapable contradiction. It not only has a surplus of goods, it has finished goods oversold imports, but of capital exports and of raw material exports as well. Since Wall Street is not in business for its health, it can only hope to point capital abroad by exporting capital abroad. Most of that capital will never be returned to the U. S. government; the U. S. workers have to pay for it in the form of decreased living standards and taxes. That capital which is invested in other countries will, as the world market shrinks (as shrink it must), compete with American capital at home. The unpaid loans abroad on the other hand must mount until it creates a depression crisis at home. The continued yearly increase in income from abroad is a strong factor for this inevitable debacle, since good business each year provides extraordinarily high government income. Once business slumps off and government income slumps off, the contradictions of “free” capitalism here at home will be felt not only in American living standards, but abroad as well.

How NOT to Fight The Taft Bill

The same stupidity and narrowness on the part of the labor skates in the AFL and CIO which made possible passage of the Taft Bill is now being manifested in the “fight” against it.

Both William Green and Philip Murray brag that despite the demand by an overwhelming majority of the rank and file for a general strike until the law is repealed they have turned thumbs down. Dan Tobin head of the AFL Teamsters, stated what those who advocate a general protest strike are "enemies of organized labor... We resent the law but the working people of this union are not revolutionists."

The misleaders of labor are going to put up a "vigorous" fight... in the courts. With high priced lawyers they will challenge every phase of the law. So what? At the end of the whole deal the Unions will be minus four or five million members, the law will still be in effect, the courts will uphold just about all of its vicious aspects, and Mr. Tobin will still be talking about how we are not revolutionists.

We will now increasingly hear about "political action" as the answer. But wasn’t Mr. Hartley, co-author of the bill, elected with the support of William Green? Weren’t dozens of other Congressmen and Senators elected with “labor’s” support? It is precisely because there is little action at the point of production that made it possible for the bill to pass in the first place. Third Parties, or P.A.C. will avail nothing. The answer to reaction can only be through independent working class action where it hurts the pocketbook of capitalism, not its conscience. Capitalism has no conscience; it never will react to votes, postcards, or telegrams. The only language it understands is the universal language of the dollar. Threaten to take that dollar away entirely and the Washington politicians will stop and ponder. Everything else rolls off like water off a duck’s back.

The Fighting Worker

Central Organ of the REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS LEAGUE

(Affiliated to the Provisional INTERNATIONAL CONTACT COMMISSION

For a New Communist 4th International)

Subscription $1.00 per Year

Published by DEMOS PRESS

Office: 700 N. State Street

Chicago, Ill.
Reuther-Stalinists Play Factional Football with Unity Issue

The strike of the workers at the Pipe Machinery plant in Clarksdale, Miss., for union recognition, has been under way for two weeks. The UAW-CIO locals have continued to fight for recognition, but the company has refused to negotiate. The workers have been striking in an effort to force the company to recognize the union. The strike has been supported by the steelworkers and the ironworkers unions.

Taft Bill Casts Its Shadow In Advance

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WHAT WE STAND FOR

1. Capitalism can be reformed. The profit system can only bring more misery, war, and depression.

2. We are therefore opposed to all reformist parties, including the Labor Party, which strive merely to patch up the present capitalist system.

3. We are for independent working class action on all fronts, starting from strike action at the point of production and leading up to the revolutionary destruction of capitalism.

4. We are for full equality for all oppressed minorities, for the right of self-determination for all colonies.

5. Defend the Soviet Union. Reestablish a Marxist-Leninist Trade Union and Armed Workers Militia to accomplish the Political Revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy. Extend the October Revolution throughout the world.

6. For a Revolutionary Marxian Party in the United States and a New Fourth Communist International on a world scale.

7. For the establishment of workers control of production for use under a workers council government.