

## Meter Workers Hit Red Tape with Mass Action

Chicago, January 28. — A strong picket line is still the best answer to legal red tape. A few days ago the situation for the Miller Meter, 835 N. Wood St. strikers looked dim. The strike had been on for about two weeks, ever since 12 of the leaders in the plant had been fired. The Labor Board had refused to grant an election to the 160 workers in the plant on the flimsy ground that the International Association of Machinists (which is scabbing and playing a strike-breaking role) has a contract to next November 1st.

The promised support by the CIO Steel Workers, who had given the Miller employees a charter after their trouble started, wasn't panning out. Even the picket signs carried by the strikers, made of plain brown cardboard with crayon print, indicated that the workers were being neglected all around.

About seventy scabs were going into the plant daily now. Each morning and each evening they were escorted by the police and by I.A.M. automobiles to trolley lines and elevated stations in a body. On Friday, however, a mass picket line made the first big dent in the morale of the scabs. The police, in vindictive anger, arrested 26 of the workers. Yesterday, another mass picket line scared the daylights out of the Company, the scabs and the police. It was found that two of the scabs were thugs, who carried blackjacks—paid strike-breakers. The police arrested 30 strikers, but the Company was forced to close the plant until "further notice". The isolated strikers, thus have won their first big victory.

### TAKE THINGS INTO OWN HANDS

The difficulties at Miller Meter began early in the month. A contract with the I.A.M. provided for reopening of wages, but the workers in the plant were dissatisfied with the way the I.A.M. officials were handling the matter.

## Jurisdiction Fights

### Provoked by N.L.R.B.

In his "State of the Union" speech, President Truman called for legislation against jurisdictional disputes. Actually, however, the capitalist government is guilty of creating more jurisdictional disputes than any thousand labor squabbles.

## PORTAL TO PORTAL PAY

During the war the government faced the problem of giving a raise to the 600,000 coal miners, who were out on strike; while at the same time devising a legal cloak that would protect the Little Steel formula intact, thus preventing other workers from getting wage increases.

The formula arrived at eventually was "portal to portal"—payment to miners for the time spent going down shafts and getting to their place of work.

The "portal to portal" formula, however, has now risen to plague the capitalists. An "irresponsible" bourgeois Judge in Michigan has ruled that other workers—in this case the workers at Mt. Clements Pottery—are also entitled to pay for the time spent in preparing for or travelling to work. The result has been an avalanche of law suits, under the fair labor standards act, to recover 4 billion dollars in back "portal to portal" pay.

There can be little question that workers should be paid for time spent changing clothes, traveling, etc. Such time is obviously spent

## NO PROTECTION IN WAGNER ACT

If a landlord wants to evict you from your home he can get an eviction notice in a couple of days. If a boss wants to fire you, he does it in two minutes—without asking anyone's permission. But if a worker demands that his boss carry out the provisions of the supposed "pro-labor" Wagner Act, it takes him thirteen months before he even begins to get a hearing. In the meantime he can starve to death, for all the National Labor Relations Board cares.

In October, November and December 1945, 70 workers of Samuel Bingham & Sons in Chicago were out on strike for nine weeks. The Company brought in professional strike-breakers and scabs—in violation of the federal law—but no one did anything about it. One of these vermin fell down the subway stairs one day and immediately the police picked up the two leaders of the strike, Nielsen and Hoffman

—the former the President of Local 120, United Rubber Workers CIO. At the same time, because of the laxity of the Company a section of its building caught fire one night; Hoffman was immediately arrested and put thru a lie-detector test on the charge that an "explosive" bomb was thrown. As was to be expected the charge proved to be false and Hoffman was never prosecuted. The other charge, however, continued to dangle over Hoffman's head.

The strike was finally settled and Hoffman went back to work "without prejudice". Carl Bingham, President of the Company, agreed to drop the charges against Hoffman, but conveniently forgot to do so, and Hoffman's lawyer gave him the foolish advice not to appear in court but to accept a plea of technical "guilt". The Judge therefore fined Hoffman \$1 and costs, and then suspended the fine.

### DISORDERLY CONDUCT

Bingham, however, immediately seized on this situation to fire Hoffman on the grounds that he was a "criminal". When the Union committee went in to see Bingham he readily admitted that he himself had been convicted of similar "crimes" of "disorderly conduct" and had also been fined \$1 for speeding. He went so far as to state that even if the judge had found Hoffman "not guilty" he, Bingham, would have fired him because he considered Hoffman guilty.

The upshot of the whole matter was that the case went to the National Labor Relations Board in January 1946. Since that time the august Board has been deciding whether Hoffman had a case or not. "Was Hoffman fired for Union activity?" Even a fourth grade idiot could answer that question, but the legal wizards in the labor board deliberately cloak the truth with a thousand bits of red tape and legalistic hogwash.

Thus the Labor Board, which is supposed to protect workers rights to belong to a Union, in reality is an instrument which gives the employers' anti-Union policies a legal cover.

in the interests of the employer. The chances of workers getting these things through the present law suits, however, is exceedingly remote. The prostitute press is raising a howl from Maine to California against this attempt to take back some of the swollen profits of the lush war years. The capitalist Congress is preparing a law to eliminate these law suits, or if that can't be done, to circumscribe them. And the legal bigwigs are appealing the cases to the Supreme Court. Their argument is that workers spend considerable time during the day—going to washrooms, smoking, paid-for lunch periods in some places, etc.—that should be DEDUCTED from wages, if the Court rules that portal to portal pay should be added.

(Continued on Page 2)

## Steel Workers Sold Short

Phil Murray, President of the CIO steelworkers, carved himself a niche in the halls of infamy the other day when he agreed to extend the present contract with U. S. Steel for 2½ months, to April 30th. The agreement says that the question of retroactive pay will be taken up later, but there is no guarantee that the workers will get back pay for these 2½ months. Chances are that they will only get a portion of that back pay, if any at all.

The Steel corporation immediately repaid Murray for his good turn by proposing that the new contract provide for an "open shop"—workers can quit the Union or refuse to join. This is the strike-breaking formula that Big Steel used in the 1920's to smash the Union.

### CLASS COLLABORATION

That Murray is doing a good job for Wall Street is reflected in the stock market prices. After months of spiraling downward, stocks have been going up for a couple of weeks, based on "optimism" in the market that there will be "labor peace". In other words the employers feel certain that Murray will pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them this year, just as he did last year—only better. Last year, Murray agreed to an 18½% raise, which cost the steel corporations \$90 million; in return the steel companies were given price boosts amounting to \$450 million, and their 1946 profits were therefore much higher than the year before.

Today Murray is bending over backward to "avoid a strike". It is safe to assume that this old labor skater will give up everything but the kitchen sink.

Murray's behavior forms a pattern that all labor skates will follow. From the point of view of Wall Street it is like manna from heaven. From the point of view of the steel worker, however, it is a nasty stab in the back. Collective bargaining must be taken out of the hands of the labor lieutenants of capital, such as Murray, Green, Lewis & Co., and put into the hands of the rank and file militants who follow a class STRUGGLE policy.

## THE FIGHTING WORKER

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## Truman's Plan for "Good Times": More Work - Less Pay

In Truman's economic message to Congress on Jan. 8, 1947, he spoke about "blending all practical programs in practical proportions" in order to forestall the coming depression.

Truman's message dealt with many issues among which were housing, social security, rent controls, and world trade. His message was, for the most part, a reorganization of the old stale formulas of Franklin Roosevelt, but it lacked the polish of that clever spell-binder and faker par-excellence.

On the question of housing the message is as fake and platitudinous as on every other important problem. Said Mr. Truman: "To reduce the cost of housing . . . we (the government) must start as promptly as possible a long range housing program". Then, in order to assure the bankers and manufacturers that he's only fooling he goes on to say, "There should be no curtailment of free (?) competition, or interference with freedom to invest funds".

### FLY IN OINTMENT

That is just the little fly in the ointment that has reduced the housing question to a political football to be booted around during elections. The building contractors and sub-contractors want their pound of flesh before a pound of cement, steel, glass, wood or rubber is put into housing. And the present high prices of these commodities preclude the possibility of any long range housing program. The approaching depression will reduce government or private housing programs to the size of the shadow of a starved pigeon. If the government's program turns out to be 1000% more effective than its past performance, it would still supply only 10% of the lower income groups with housing.

### INCREASED PRODUCTION

Truman's comments on labor's demands are on par with most of his other asinine observations. "For its own advantage as well as that of the country at large, labor should refrain from demands for excessive wage increases that would require price increases . . ."

It seems that nowadays when a labor faker or an office boy for big business wants to sell labor a reactionary bill of goods it is always for "labor's own good". Truman, ever ready to increase the bloated profits of big business offers labor the advice that the solution to higher living standards lies in "increased productivity".

Slowly the British workers are learning that only through another General Strike can they take the first step towards solving the demands of not only one group out on strike, but the working class as a whole.

The workers of Britain are weighed down by "their" Labor Party Government in its at

of 1946 the first 350 big corporations to report their profits showed an increase of 70% over the corresponding quarter of 1945.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics in a recent release states that consumer prices went up 16.8% (from April 1945 to October 1946) while purchasing power went down 16.7% in the same period. According to these figures wages would have to go up at least 33.5% in order to keep in line with the increased cost of living.

Despite all this Truman, the incompetent office boy of Wall St. has the insufferable gall to tell labor not to ask for "excessive wage increases".

### ARGUMENT A MYTH

As for Wall St.'s argument that increased productivity is the road to real higher living standards, that is a malicious myth which is not supported by the historical record. Anna Rochester, dealing with this question in her book "Rulers of America" says, "The workers output per man hour of labor has been sharply increased both during the post war boom (World War II) and since 1929. It has been pushed up by actual increase in productivity and by speeding up and intensifying the worker's labor. Even during prosperity there was no proportionate increase in wages to the individual workers or to the working class as a whole."

The figures of the National Industrial Conference Board confirm her argument to the hilt. According to their estimate (from 1923 to 1929) the average manufacturing output per man increased by 23%; the yearly output per worker increased by 21%, while total payrolls increased only 4%. From 1929 to 1933 the output per worker, because of a sharp decline in average working hours, fell by 3%; total payrolls decreased by 56%. In both these periods, the hourly return to the wage worker bore no relation to his increased output per man hour. From 1923 to 1929, the average hourly wage increased 9%, against an hourly output that increased by 23%; from 1929 to 1931 the wage

(Continued on Page 2)

### CAPITALIST "PLANNING"

Here is as good an example as one could want of capitalist planlessness. In Washington, D. C., Ralph E. Burleson found a 6 room flat for his wife and seven children. But at the last minute they were barred from moving in. Why? It seems that regulations governing this low-cost housing unit he was to occupy prohibit overcrowding. More than seven people in a three-bedroom flat is considered over-crowding. So Burleson and family remain in their present location—a ONE room flat. God Bless America!

## TWO STANDARDS OF JUSTICE

The role of the courts as an arm of the ruling class was recently illustrated in Elizabeth, N. J., with the utmost clarity. A Union County jury returned indictments against 17 workers and local union officials, based on their activities in the Phelps Dodge strike several months before. Sixteen of the workers are members of the United Electrical Workers CIO; the other is a young girl who spoke at a strike rally on the subject of "world peace". She is being held for "inciting to riot".

Mayor Kirk of Elizabeth, also spoke at this strike rally, but for some strange reason he was not indicted. County Judge Edward McGrath slapped \$26,000 bail on the 17 workers. The day before, however, this same judge turned loose Anthony Anastasia, notorious member of Murder, Inc., a defunct Brooklyn mob, on bail of only \$2,000. Anastasia was hired by the Phelps Dodge Company for strike-breaking activities. He had been charged with assault on striker Bert Eckstein, who was wounded during the strike. Another picket, Mario Russo, father of three children and ex-serviceman, had been killed by the strike-breakers.

The same grand jury, however, which indicted the leaders of Local 441 UE, refused to indict the murderer of picket Russo — returning a vague John Doe charge.

### TWO STANDARDS

The paid killers of the ruling class are thus either let loose or pandered to. Crimes like murder get off with \$2,000 bail; but strike picketing and speaking at strike meetings bring charges of "inciting to riot" and large bail! This attitude of the courts is nothing new; it was used in the coal fields, the lead and lumber strikes and many others. The ruling class always use THEIR courts against workers.

The Stalinists who control the UE-CIO called the Phelps Dodge Co. a "brazen" corporation, in their official paper UE News. They termed the trial a "spite" trial. This is deliberate lying and misleadership. ALL corporations are brazen and will remain so, except where independent workers action forces them to be otherwise. And these trials are not "spite" trials at all, but are a part of the whole capitalist machinery to intimidate workers away from independent militant action.

The Stalinist nonsense about "brazen corporations" and "spite" trials paves the illusion that there are "good" capitalists and "bad" capitalists.

The fact of the matter is that the whole capitalist system is guilty of a brazen attitude — exploitation — of the masses, and of constant use of the courts, the government and above all the police and army, against the masses to keep them in subjection.

### LONDON STRIKE

(Continued from Page 1)

tempt to save the capitalist class of England from ruin. In order to accomplish this the workers must suffer. The Labor Government is trying to boost exports 75% above pre-war levels. Faced with an independence movement in India, Burma, etc., American economic gains, and loss of its influence in the Mediterranean and the Middle East to the U. S. Imperialists, these "Labor" leaders are marking the British workers pay for this attempt to save the hide of British Imperialism. The workers pay with continued food rationing, cuts in fuel, anti-labor legislation freezing them to their job, higher taxes, etc.

The British experience is TYPICAL of all so-called "Labor" Party governments. The Labor skates are used in politics to continue and extend the service they give capitalism in the unions.

## Arm Beaten Nations to Fight Workers

In the face of all kinds of talk about disarmament, it is surprising to note that DEFEATED nations such as Italy, Finland, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Rumania are to be permitted to keep substantial armed forces, under terms of the first five "peace" treaties. Italy is to be permitted to keep a military machine of 275,000 men; small Rumania will have 133,000 men; Hungary 70,000; Bulgaria 63,700; and even Finland, 41,900. This is in addition to various other armed forces such as police.

One can readily understand why the VICTORIOUS powers are refusing to disarm; they are evidently bent on preparing for new wars. But why are the DEFEATED nations encouraged to keep substantial military forces?

The answer can be found in a recent speech by John Foster Dulles, leading Republican adviser to Arthur Vandenberg and Tom Dewey. Before making this speech Dulles had discussed the matter with these two gentlemen and also with President Truman.

Dulles warned that there is a "double-bar-

reled" challenge from the Soviet Union—"social revolution throughout the world" and "nationalistic expansion. The latter has been effectively curbed this last year, but social revolution—"the ideological barrel" is still loaded and aimed. "In most of the world", says Dulles, "effective popular leadership is in the hands of persons who are sympathetic to Soviet Communist doctrines".

THIS is the "danger" we face in 1947, according to this bourgeois spokesman. The danger of war is not the most important phenomenon facing us; the danger of Revolution is a potent threat which must be dealt with immediately by the U. S.

Here, therefore, is an explanation of the "peace" treaties. Italy, Rumania, et al, are being armed to fight against their own working masses! The imperialists prove once again that, victor or vanquished, there is no difference between them when it comes to fighting the MAIN enemy, the oppressed workers and peasants.

### TRUMAN

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## Richberg Predicts "Civil War"

In Philadelphia, recently, Donald Richberg, one time General Counsel of the NRA, said: "Today there is danger of civil war unless strong curbs are placed on labor. Unless the gigantic powers of labor leaders are cut down and the Unions and their officials are compelled to subordinate private interest to the public's interest, we shall be driven deeper and deeper into political war which may become a civil war."

And whose interest does he deem the public? The public surely does not mean the working class because their interests are in contradiction to his. No, the public Mr. Richberg represents and refers to is the ruling class, the capitalists, the parasites who profit through the workers sweat, blood and toil. Mr. Richberg (and the name is very appropriate for the character) attacks the gigantic power of labor leaders.

This attack, however, is only a smoke screen for his main attack against the working class, and not the labor leaders who, as a majority, have been under the control of capitalism and operate in the working class organizations as lieutenants for the ruling class (Lewis, Murray, Green). Yes it appears that the workers are awakening to the part played by these labor leaders and the capitalist system as a whole. And these labor lieutenants will not be able to control as fully in the future as they have in the past. So Mr. Richberg thinks now is the time to apply the complete force of the state against labor legislation backed by armed forces of the city, state and Federal Governments. Complete slavery with shackles and chains.

Next he mentions this civil or political war. He could be more to the point and say Revolution. But that is a horrible word to the Richbergs, Du Ponts, Rockefellers, Fords and the ruling class and their agents as a whole. Yes, the ruling class and their servant Mr. Richberg, see the handwriting on the wall. They are talking of "civil war" in order themselves to prepare for Fascism in America.

We, too, must prepare — for communism! Only the Proletarian Revolution can Defeat Fascism.

The coming crisis puts on the agenda of the day the need for (1) a 30 hour week with no decrease in wages. (2) Increases in wages over and above the rise in the cost of living. (3) Every shop a union shop. A united trade union movement on a class struggle basis. (4) The development of a nationwide progressive rank and file movement in the trade union.

A fight for these things will show the working class in life that even these partial demands can't be won and kept under the capitalist system. More and more the workers of America will come to understand that only the socializing of the means of production under working class rule can solve his problems. Every capitalist panacea will be shattered by the truth that capitalism itself is the obstacle in the way of any social progress for mankind.

### MILITANT ACTION NEEDED

In the coming period the working class will hear more and more of the virtues of increased production and of many incentive plans (speedup), of guaranteed annual wages, etc., etc. The price to be exacted for these panaceas will undoubtedly be that labor play the part of a docile dog. Capitalism will tell us of all the glittering gains we can make if only we don't strike, picket, demonstrate, etc.

If recent history demonstrates the need for militant action to preserve our standards and gain higher standards the future will show that U. S. Capitalism pushed by stiff competition with the British Empire and the threat of revolution in Europe will be driven to smash all concessions won by labor including the trade union movement itself. Both Truman and Taft, by slightly different methods are preparing for this same end.

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### WHAT WE STAND FOR

FEBRUARY 12, 1947

## Trotskyites in the Elections for Mayor

In Chicago the Schachtmanites (Workers Party) are running a candidate for Mayor, Albert Goldman. If anyone wants an object lesson in how Marxists should NOT conduct themselves in bourgeois elections, the Goldman candidacy offers that lesson.

In a printed circular the WP states that Goldman is running to give workers of Chicago an opportunity to register their PRO-LABOR convictions. This is a typical reformist catchphrase. Revolutionary Marxists participate in elections to give workers a chance to register their ANTI-CAPITALIST convictions. We participate in elections to educate workers to the fact that those elections are a farce and that ONLY the overthrow of capitalism can gain for us our demands.

Marxists emphasize as their main point in all election campaigns that capitalism must be destroyed. That is why Marxists do not support candidates of other parties — we try to make it clear that our problems can NOT be solved by bourgeois elections. Goldman, however, confines his whole platform to immediate demands, housing, transit, schools, taxes, Negroes, etc. — as if to say that such problems CAN be solved under capitalism.

The program gives that implication throughout. You are asked to vote for Goldman if "you realize that workers must organize politically as well as economically, and must act independently of the employers and their two parties." To uninitiated workers this may sound

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### WHAT WE STAND FOR

1. Capitalism can not 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 Marxian Party, Soviets, Trade Unions 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.

## News of Local 788 UAW-CIO

Strange things are going on in Local 788 UAW-CIO, Chicago. The Local leadership, under Stanley Solak and Ernie Herbst, shows a strange reluctance to collect about \$5,000 coming to "788" from their old amalgamated Local 453, which is under Stalinist ideological control. Every time the matter of collecting this money, voted to Local 788 by the last UAW convention, comes up, Solak and Herbst give a thousand arguments to show that actually there is practically no money coming from Local 453.

Local 788, which represents Illinois Malleable workers, broke away from Local 453 during the war, because of the no-strike policies of the "453" leadership and its do-nothing tactics. At that time the Union had a militant leadership under a bricklayer named Joe Zrust. Before the war ended, however, the new Local 788 was given an 18 month run around for wage increases. The UAW international representative, Al Green, helped this process along by first giving up all demands for wage increases and then stalling matters for months. The result was that the old administration of Solak's strengthened by returns from the Army, got back into the saddle.

Solak and Herbst are evidently hell-bent on going back to the discredited Local 453. They are doing everything in their power to smooth the way.

The Solak administration is very much like the Local 453 administration. Money is being spent left and right. Solak decided recently to build a Union office. So far \$5,700 has been spent on this venture and a one story shack is coming into existence. Even an optimistic estimate would place the value of the shack itself as negligible. It is made of green lumber which will soon warp and its construction is shoddy according to all experts. By some odd coincidence the contractor for the job happens to be Stanley Solak's own brother!

Workers of "788" are beginning to wake up again. The effect of the Solak group can be felt in settlement of grievances, where the workers no longer get the break they previously received. A new and stronger opposition is bound to develop.

## OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY

The capitalist lickspittles never tire of telling us that America is owned by the people. American Tel & Tel brags in paid advertisements about the fact that its stock is literally owned by hundreds of thousands of people. "Who says", they argue, "that the big corporations are controlled by a handful of people? All the little people, including thousands of workers, own stock in our company."

This capitalist myth was again exploded recently when the newspapers announced that the up and coming railroad tycoon, Robert R. Young, had just won control of the New York Central Railroad. How much stock did it take to gain control? Only 4.8% of the total number of shares issued. The hundreds of thousands of shareholders may own a few shares, but their voice is meaningless. Young, who now owns only one out of every twenty shares is the actual ruler of this gigantic empire.

The story is even more fantastic. Cyrus Eaton, Young's spokesman, pointed out that the hub of Young's empire was the Alleghany Corporation. This corporation, in turn owns 6% of the stock in the Chesapeake and Ohio railroad (which gives Young control). In turn C & O, by similar shenanigans, owns the Nickel Plate road and Pere Marquette.

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