

JULY 29, 1947

Rail Strike Threat Gains Results

BULLETIN The SP engineers settled their July 21st strike after 6 hours. Exact details of the settlement are not yet known as we go to press. Major demand is for a \$2.93 raise per day.

A settlement just reached between the Locomotive, Firemen, Enginemen and the Texas & New Orleans (also known as the Atlantic line of the Southern Pacific) broke the ice in a long accumulated log jam of grievances among train, engine and yard service workers. Other crafts, however, are still out in the cold.

The S. P.'s notorious tough policy of adjusting grievances is well known. More of its cases were piled up before the National Railroad Mediation Board than any other carrier.

The National Railroad Mediation Board with the aid of the present set up of 21 separate unions in railroad industries, did a bang up job of divide and conquer.

Four organizations had either started or completed a strike vote. The firemen and engineers had voted 99% for a strike. The locomotive engineers had set June 8 for a walk out on the S. P.'s Pacific system but deferred it when the board intervened.

After two weeks of mediation an agreement was reached between the firemen and engineers and the T&NO. Vice-President William Lash, who represented the brotherhood in the conference, declared that a "very satisfactory settlement" was entered into, affecting 1,200 B. of L&E members of the system.

JOHN DEWEY
"A MARXIAN CRITIQUE"
By SID OKUN
10c

Windbag Lewis and the Miners

Within a few hours after the passage of the Taft-Hartley Labor Bill, the more militant coal miners spontaneously struck in protest. A few days later, 400,000 miners were out of the pits. Many Trade Union Locals called upon John L. Lewis to lead a general protest strike against the new anti-labor law. If Lewis had answered the call, he would have found hearty response, not only among the miners, but from the rank and file of all organized labor.

But anyone who really expected Lewis to lead such protest action has simply been blinded by the sham show of militancy which Lewis occasionally uses in order to confuse his membership and the advanced workers everywhere.

Lewis began his labor career under the tutelage of the reactionary labor lieutenant Sam Gompers, for whom he served as legislative representative in Illinois. He then climbed to the top in the Mine Union, not as an elected official, but as a machine man who rose with the machine. During the first ten years of his leadership he broke down every vestige of democracy in his Union and betrayed a dozen large scale strikes. He deprived 20 out of 30 districts of their autonomy, expelled leaders like John Brophy, Alec Howat, George Voysey and many others. He first showed his true colors on a large scale when he betrayed the 1919 strike of the coal miners under cover of the reactionary phrase "you can not fight the government". He has followed this policy throughout his career.

Many of the grievances were cleared up including quite a few that involved substantial back wage claims, Lash said. Other gains were secured, too, including the right to represent outside hostlers; improved rule relative to discipline cases, and a requirement that ice water be furnished at all terminals. (This is important in hot climates).

OTHER CRAFTS STILL FIGHTING

However no settlement was reached at the Washington parley of the Pacific system, which had provoked strike votes by two other crafts, the engineers and conductors and trainmen. These two are taking a strike vote, and the Mediation Board, which is the tool of the Rail barons, will be on hand to intervene after the vote is completed, to stall and halt strike action.

The rail kings, the Mediation board, and their Labor Lieutenants did a very neat job for the S. P. system. The solidarity of all the workers on this road was prevented by a piece meal dealing with each separate union on different parts of the S. P.'s system.

Thus the divide and conquer tactic used by the rail barons, giving a few more crumbs to the most united and militant group, the firemen and enginemen on the T&NO, removed them from the scene of strife, temporarily.

The railroad worker can soon remedy this situation of defeats and hollow "victories" of a few crumbs plus ice water to wash it down, if and when he unites all crafts and shows a solid front against the boss class and his agents. A united industrial union of all RR workers is the crying need to offset the divide and conquer tactics that the capitalists of the rails are so fond of using.

key factor in forming any real fighting opposition to the new anti-labor law. Militants throughout the nation would have rallied immediately behind any movement by the mine workers. But both Lewis and the House of Morgan, which negotiated with him realized this danger. They settled the economic issues quickly and stopped the political protest.

\$6.00 RAISE

The capitalist press blazed headlines of a 35c to 45c per hour raise for the miners. Actually the take-home pay was increased \$6 per week, or 15c per hour, which is the general pattern in the whole industry. The difference is taken up by the reduction in working hours, from nine to eight per day. The Chairman of the United States Steel Corporation correctly defended the settlement from the wrath of his fellow capitalists by pointing out that it was the same kind of weekly wage increase gained by workers in other industries, not more.

That the gain was this much is not Lewis' fault. He has always backed down from a Goldsborough injunction. The gains made now are the result of the complete and unparalleled solidarity of the mineworkers. Undoubtedly a rank and file-controlled leadership could have done much better.

These gains can be and will be wiped out — as were previous miners' gains — if the Union members place any faith in John L. This master of the labor fakers can sell out a strike and accept a wage increase with greater grandiloquence and more wind than any other later in captivity. He can dress up a defeat as a victory, and can press even a minor victory into a gigantic one. When it comes back to the mine towns, however, the Lewis reign has resulted in thousands of heartaches and considerable hunger. Particularly when times get worse, must the miners keep a sharp eye on Lewis and organize their own rank and file groups.

Wall Street Spends OUR Billions To Keep Slave System Alive

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imperialism everywhere. Under a Marxist leadership the development of Soviet economy would manifest itself more and more as a struggle for the extension of the Russian revolution. The Russian Revolution must — to live — have an outward direction. Even under the blight of Stalinism the development of Soviet economy has an outward direction.

But the mortal fear of spreading the workers' revolution drives Stalinism to Stalinize Europe by nationalizing industries and lands from the T.O.P., without organizing real soviets and without expropriation of the basic capitalists.

The position of the petty bourgeoisie and incipient bourgeois elements in the bureaucracy, tends to drive for wars and skirmishes to gain access to raw materials, capital goods, and strategical positions. Inevitably this must result in a more sharpened antagonism between the revolutionary working class of Europe against Stalinism, on the one hand, and the workers in the Soviet Union against Stalinism, on the other.

Without the extension of the October revolution in Europe and throughout the world, and without the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy by the Russian workers, the Soviet Union is doomed. Never was the question of the mechanics of organizing the working class for a political revolution against Stalinism as important as it is today. The struggle against imperialism and the defense of the Soviet Union cannot take place without at the same time a struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy and its appendages, the "Communist" Parties, throughout the world.

The recent coal mine shutdown merely continues to expose the role which Lewis has always played. The workers walked out in spontaneous mass strike against the Taft-Hartley Bill. The fact that a demand for a new contract was coupled with this protest against the Labor Bill does not lessen the POLITICAL possibilities of this spontaneous movement. As TIME of July 7 states: "In his cocked fist, Lewis held the threat of a full scale strike". John L. Lewis was the

SHOT GUN RENT BOOSTS

An enterprising landlord went to his six tenants and told them individually that the last one to sign the lease providing for a 15% rent boost would have to move, since he himself wanted the apartment. Since moving is an impossibility in the crowded city, the six tenants jumped all over themselves signing the lease and paying the increase. The landlord, of course, had no intention of evicting anyone. He used the ruse only to get more rent.

Such ruses and tricks could be repeated by the thousand. Most landlords merely had to remind tenants that they could have their rents doubled after February 20, when the rent "control" bill goes out of existence, to get signatures on the new rent-gouging leases.

The situation in apartment hotels all over the country was particularly deplorable. Increases of from 20% to 400% were very much in evidence. Given a new impetus to swindle the tenant landlords are using hundreds of party tricks to gain higher rents. Six room apartments are being converted into six single rooms, each one of which rents for as much as the whole apartment did previously. "Remodeling", "conversion" and a host of other loopholes of the rent bill have become formulas for enormous rent boosts.

PLANNED GOUGING

To add insult to injury the landlords refer to their rent gouging leases as contracts which are purely voluntary. Yes, as voluntary as the medieval highwayman who pressed a gun to his victim's head and demanded his money or his life. The real estate associations planned the strategy which the landlords are following. The threats to discontinue heat, garbage disposal, upkeep of plumbing, discontinuance of cleaning are too uniformly resorted to by the landlords to be merely a spontaneous act. This shameful extortion from labor's pocketbook is as voluntary as a wage cut which is imposed on a worker.

Two years after the end of the war, production of new homes is so pathetically small that the housing shortage will undoubtedly remain with us for some time to come. Only as unemployment grows and as people are forced to double up with their in-laws or with friends, will the situation relax. The same capitalism which could build a 100 billion dollar war machine in two years is completely bankrupt in easing the positive needs of the people such as housing.

Momentarily all kinds of tenant groups are mushrooming into existence. The Stalinists are using the apparatus of the Progressive Citizens of America — their liberal front — as a rallying force for tenants.

The tenant problem is so pressing that the authorities are unable to come out into the open in support of the landlords. To do so today would be political suicide for many big city politicians. The legalistic maneuvers, therefore, of the Stalinist groups are able to win some victories.

The tenant problem, however, will eventually merge with the unemployed problem. Caught in the vice of lay-offs and increased rents the worker will leave to fight back with some real militancy to keep a roof over his head. Tenant groups and unemployed groups, working with the labor movement, will have to use force to keep workers homes intact.

As in the depression days, groups of workers will have to stop the sheriff from making evictions and will have to move evicted tenants back into their apartments, if the sheriff at first succeeds. Recourse to the courts were worse than valueless in the depression days. Another recession would bring forth similar hostility on the part of the authorities and a similar need for militancy on the part of the tenants.

THE FIGHTING WORKER

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Wall Street Spends OUR Billions To Keep Slave System Alive

Despite the optimistic note being sounded by the standard bearers for the Marshall plan the inter-imperialist antagonisms will show up for the plan for what it is — a preparation for the coming counter-revolutionary attack on the Soviet Union and a club against the revolutions which will undoubtedly sweep Europe.

The Stalinist bureaucracy, as a counter move to the Marshall Plan, is beginning to shape up what may be referred to as the Molotov Plan. This plan includes economic and political agreements to set up a system of Stalinized European buffer states as a counter-offensive to the CORDON SANITAIRE which U. S. is building up. As part of this project a South Slav federation is being plugged for by the Stalinist bureaucracy. In such an arrangement trade relations would be worked out so that Yugoslavia would benefit from Bulgaria's tobacco, while Bulgaria would gain from Yugoslavia's exports of lumber, copper, chrome, and bauxite. Thus the Balkans are once more becoming one of the "powder kegs" of Europe. And Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and part of Austria are definitely within the Stalinized system of buffer states being organized on the periphery of the Soviet Union.

STALIN VS. UNCLE SAM

The effect of World War II in losses of men, destruction of resources and factories of the Soviet Union as well as the logic of development of Soviet economy is driving the Stalinist bureaucracy into conflict with U. S. and British.

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\$9 FINE PER MURDER

What price murder! The Centralia Coal Company, which killed one hundred and eleven miners in the March 25th explosion in its mine, has been fined the minimum provided by the state of \$1,000 for "willful neglect" — \$9 for each murder!

Every criminal would like to get a break like that. Men who steal \$10 or \$20 are sometimes railroaded to jail for twenty years. But the powerful Centralia Coal Company which, by its deliberate neglect, murdered off such a large number of people and destroyed the family life of four or five hundred more, is let off with a pitiful token payment of \$1,000.

And to cap the climax, the \$1,000 (and more) is already passed on to the public in the form of higher prices for coal.

The owners of the Centralia company are as guilty of murder as if they had used a gun and should have been treated accordingly. But under our capitalist "justice" starving people to death, or forcing them of work under a murderous lack of safety devices, is no crime. Murder and robbery are crimes only when committed by poor people; otherwise they are only "unfortunate" mistakes!

LABOR DAY RALLY A HOLLOW "PROTEST"

Now that the horse is out of the stable the two "Bills" who run the Chicago Federation of Labor have decided to close the barn door. Prior to the passage of the Taft-Hartley legislation Bill Lee, President of the CFL and Bill McFetridge, power behind the throne, failed to organize even a moderate demonstration against the slave law. Mayor Kennelly was quietly approached and asked to do what William O'Dwyer, mayor of New York had done — speak at a mass protest meeting in opposition to the bill. But when Kennelly turned this idea down the leadership of the CFL just sat back and sent postcards to Washington.

The belated protest on Labor Day will be a very mild "protest" indeed. Speakers invited include the same Kennelly who didn't want to talk BEFORE the bill was passed; Governor Green, reactionary Republican, whose Party leaders pushed the bill through; and William Green, President of the A. F. of L., whose timid behavior in refusing to sanction national strike action in the face of the overwhelming sentiment for it is in great measure responsible for Labor's defeat.

NO PROGRAM PUT FORTH

At the CFL meeting which discussed the Labor Day demonstration, nothing was said about the political program for the event. Unquestionably the lesson that will be implanted in the minds of the workers will be "reward your friends, punish your enemies — elect 'good' men to Congress next time". This sort of nonsense will win nothing for the workers. The Taft-Hartley bill must be fought DURING its enforcement by greater labor solidarity. It must be fought by more strikes and greater militancy. It must be fought by united action of ALL unions in refusing to cross each other's picket lines.

But the leaders of the AFL have already stated where they stand. Dan Tobin, head of the Teamsters (largest AFL affiliate) has threatened again to suspend Teamster locals that strike in sympathy with other Unions. He has called for respecting the Taft Bill. "We are not revolutionists", he says. The other AFL bigwigs have promulgated a similar program — not action at the point of production, but "election of good men" is the by-word.

Under such circumstances the Labor Day Rally can only be a circus. People will come to see and hear the Hollywood stars invited to entertain, but they will get no message of struggle.

In effect the Labor Day "action" is no action at all — it is simply an attempt to cover up inaction. Having done nothing to stop passage of the Taft Bill the leaders of the once very militant Chicago Federation of Labor are now merely trying to clear their skirts with their memberships by putting on a gala circus.

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The "Democratic Process" In Korea

What America has done in Korea completely exposes its pretensions to spread "democracy". In the U. S. and Europe conditions still make it possible for Uncle Sam to cloak his nefarious motives with "liberal" phrases. In Korea it's different.

The U. S. has two reasons for maintaining a force in Korea. First, it is fearful of any moves on the part of the masses to solve their own problems. Formation of Peoples Committees to divide the land may spread to other sections of Asia unless it is put down in Korea. Secondly, Korea holds a strategical position as a flank on the Soviet Union's eastern frontier. Wall Street views this as an important military and political point to counteract Stalinist influence in Manchuria and to threaten the Siberian frontier of the Soviet Union.

The masses, however, set up Peoples Committees of Law and Order in various parts of the country when it was apparent that Japan was on the road to defeat. These Committees ousted collaborators and took control of the country. They organized the distribution of rice on a more equitable basis and redistributed considerable land.

Both the Stalinist bureaucracy and American capitalism, however, were fearful that these Committees would go too far in their democratic moves. Hence they insisted on armies of occupation in a country that had been under the yoke of Japan for decades! In the Soviet zone the Stalinists allowed the Peoples Committees to function, but subordinate to the wishes of the army of occupation.

ILLEGALIZE COMMITTEES

In the American zone the Committees were immediately illegalized and former Japanese administrators and collaborators were put back into

many seats of power. The same absentee landlords who collaborated with the Japanese imperialists during the war are now given the green light by General Hodge, head of the American army of occupation.

For these advantages America is paying the price of \$140 millions for yearly occupation costs and is preparing a \$500 million three year loan program to stabilize the American occupation zone.

The American military government has doled out \$333,000 besides equipment and supplies of gasoline, automobiles, shoes, cots, etc., for the formation of a Korean boy scout movement, that will form the basis for an anti-Soviet nationalistic Korean Army. This boy scout movement has 80,000 members, and its instructor both come from, and base themselves on, the teachings of the Hitler Youth Movement.

Thus the pretensions for democracy are so much eyewash. Uncle Sam refuses to permit the real democratic forces — the workers and peasants of Korea — any say in the government. It prefers instead to deal with collaborators of Japan, absentee landlords and fascists.

Facts and Fancy In Hungarian Crisis

CRUMBS TO STOP REVOLT

The Stalinists, in order to stave off any movement on the part of the Hungarian masses to take matters into their own hands, have divided a considerable portion of the land. \$800 millions in damage was suffered by Hungary during the war. One half of the cattle and horses were lost, 66% of the pigs, 75% of the sheep, and one half of the farm tools and machines. In addition a drought in 1946 resulted in considerable starvation.

Confronted by these circumstances the Stalinists instituted some land reform in which the feudal estates of 50,000 aristocrats were divided. Those with 1,000 acres were entirely dispossessed. Others were allowed to keep 140 acres. Many peasants got 6 to 12 acres, and the workers in industry were given a sop by the so-called nationalization program.

Neither Nagy stooges of Wall Street, nor the Stalinists can really solve the Hungarian problem. The masses need complete expropriation of the capitalists, not reformist plans whereby the capitalists continue to extort profits even though industry is nationalized. The land must not only be divided by elementary steps taken to bolster the poor peasant, to form machinery collectives, buying collectives, etc., the whole fabric of capitalism must be uprooted. Stalinism attempts merely to reform the system from one direction. Nagy attempts to bring it back to the "old" ways. Neither offers a solution.

IS A LABOR PARTY THE ANSWER TO THE TAFT BILL?

WHAT IS A "LABOR SLATE"

The slogan "A Labor Slate in '48! Put Labor in the White House!" is a harmful vestige and a shameful policy. Whom do the Trotskyites mean when they say "Labor" in the White House? Do they perhaps mean James P. Cannon, running on the program of the Trotsky Party? In that case, why build another Party, a so-called "Labor" Party? If the workers can accept the ideas of a socialist state, then they certainly will not be refracted by a label. Obviously by "Labor in the White House", the Trotskyites mean the Labor FAIRERS, such as Dubinsky, Lewis, Reuther, et al. During the war the Trotskyites were ready to accept conscription so long as it was run by these gentry for the White House. The same fakers who betray labor in its day to day struggles, who undermine Labor's efforts and who collaborate with the employers, are now to be asked to rule the country in the name of "Labor"!

Isn't it significant that those who refused general strike action are so vigorous in their demand for parliamentary action? Isn't it obvious that the two are antipodes? Campaigning for "good" congressmen is a SUBSTITUTE for action at the point of production, strikes, demonstrations, organization of workers defense groups and workers councils to defend labor. Putting "Labor in the White House" is no more a solution in America than it was in England.

BRITISH EXAMPLE

In England Labor is IN the White House. And what is the result? Strike-breaking by the government is even greater in England than in the U. S. A forced-labor bill is advocated by Labor Party government leaders that is even worse than the Taft-Hartley bill.

On the part of the reformist labor leaders such as Reuther, Wolchok, Dubinsky, the call for a "Labor Party" is an attempt to channelize Labor's efforts away from militancy in the factories into the harmless channels of the electoral system. On the part of the "left" wing Labor Partyites the call for a Third Party is shameful treachery. These people prattle about "revolution" on Sundays, but when it comes to downright proposals for action they always tail-end the reformist camp.

How can one talk of destroying the capitalist system in one breath and propose Labor in the White House with the other. Labor has been in the White House during the Blum government in France, the Caballero government in Spain, the MacDonald and Attlee governments in England, and innumerable other popular front and "socialist" governments throughout Europe. Has that made any difference? Not one iota. Blum took away most of the gains made by French Labor prior to his accession. MacDonald and Attlee distinguished themselves as strike-breakers.

In fact such behavior is inevitable. You can not put a square peg in a round hole. A working class leader can not rule at the head of a capitalist state, except by carrying out the historic tasks of the capitalist class.

Possibly a more "liberal" group of politicians in Washington would have delayed passing the Taft Bill this year; but such legislation is inevitable as soon as the capitalist crisis deepens. It must be remembered that the "liberal" Roosevelt instituted all kinds of controls over labor, including the illegalization of its basic right to strike during the war. Given a certain condition the capitalists must resort to certain anti-labor measures. Given a crisis they will pass on the cost to the working man — no matter WHO is in the White House.

then participating in elections in order to use it as a FORUM TO EXPOSE CAPITALISM AND THE WHOLE CAPITALIST MACHINERY becomes an auxiliary.

BREAK WITH STATE

We must bend every effort to break the worker from the capitalist state — that is the essence of a correct program to fight reaction. The Green-Murray-Trotsky-Stalinist plan ties the worker more firmly to the capitalist state, instills illusions about reforming it by putting "labor men" into office. This is political action all right, but WRONG political action. It is not an answer to the Taft Bill; on the contrary it is the same kind of reformist thinking and action which made the Taft Bill possible. It should be recalled that when the CIO labor leaders found workers rebelling against their no-strike policy at the end of the war they fed them the pap of "Political Action Committee". In the first election that PAC participated in, the leadership was intoxicated with its "victories", particularly the role it played in re-electing Roosevelt. Subsequently these victories were shown to be shams; the workers showed their dissatisfaction with the Roosevelt Party in the 1946 elections by voting for any opposition that made itself volatile — in this case the Republicans. The PAC program had proven its bankruptcy. Workers found that its opposition was only token opposition to capitalism, not real opposition.

The new Labor Party agitation is PAC on a broader scale, but it can only lead to similar debacles. The slogan will undoubtedly be popular for some time to come. Anyone who supports this reformist catchall, however, will eventually pay with his political head. The workers will not soon forget those who led them into another reformist blind alley, rather than telling them the truth.

FRAME-UP OF STALINISTS

Gerhard Eisler, Eugene Dennis and other leaders of the "Communist" (Stalinist) Party are being railroaded to jail on flimsy charges of refusing to comply with the rules of the House Un-American Committee.

Many so-called revolutionists are gloating over these misfortunes of the Stalinists. "Serves them right", is the claim. This kind of thinking is a menace to the whole movement. We certainly have no brief for the Stalinists; the working class some day will settle accounts with these traitors in its own way. But the campaign against Dennis, Eisler, Fast and others is only an OPENING gun to railroad to jail ANYONE who will oppose, for whatever reason, the coming war of American capitalism against the Soviet Union and against the world working class.

The Stalinists today offer an excellent scapegoat for Wall Street. The Russian regime is so obviously a police character and the Stalinist Parties are so obviously only a border patrol for the foreign policy of Uncle Joe, that it is relatively simple to isolate these people and send them to jail. But these frame-ups are forebodings of the future. Let no one rejoice. Today the Stalinists are sent to prison; tomorrow the genuine anti-war fighters against the American counter-revolution will be framed.

While we struggle politically against Stalinism we offer our support in the fight against the present wave of government frame-ups!

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 Militias 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.