

**Coal Miners Strike
Against Slave Law**

See Page 2

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401

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FIGHT WALL STREET'S SLAVE LAW BY BUILDING LABOR'S OWN PARTY

Truman Gesture Is Bid For Votes

Last-Minute Veto Designed To Hide Anti-Union Record

By Joseph Hansen

The top bureaucrats of the AFL, CIO and Railroad Brotherhoods are hailing Harry S. Truman as a friend of labor. His strongly-worded veto of the deadly Taft-Hartley bill was apparently sufficient in their opinion to make up for his whole previous anti-labor record.

Is the extravagant praise of the labor bureaucrats justified? Was Truman suddenly converted overnight from a bitter foe of the labor movement into its champion?

To find the correct answers, we must first of all take a look at the political stakes for which Truman was playing. In the 1946 elections, the Democrats suffered a severe defeat. Many who had previously supported the Democrats either voted against them or else stayed away from polls. They thus registered their bitterness and resentment over the rotten postwar world that stands in such stark contrast to the glowing propaganda Wall Street dished out during the war. In the 1948 election, the Democrats fear they will lose the White House too.

What worries Truman's political advisers most of all is the trend of the labor movement toward independent political action. Had Truman openly backed the Taft-Hartley bill or permitted it to become law without his signature, it would have enormously hampered the efforts of Democratic wheelhorses to halt this trend. Consequently Truman denounced the bill in terms most calculated to appeal to the labor movement.

Truman's veto was thus designed to provide the labor bureaucrats with a talking point to make it easier to sell him to the workers in the 1948 election. Truman's veto is a repeat performance of Roosevelt's infamous tactics with similar bills. In 1943, it will be recalled, when the coal miners demanded a boost in wages to keep up with sky-rocketing living costs, Roosevelt threatened to draft them and force them to work under military regulations.

Congress then rushed through the outrageous Smith-Connelly anti-labor act. But Roosevelt did not sign it. He vetoed it in order to appear as a friend of labor. Congress then promptly passed it over his veto.

As the July 3, 1943, *Militant* declared: "Roosevelt's opposition . . . was hypocritical and perfunctory. He just went through the motions in order to deceive labor." This analysis was confirmed to the hilt by Roosevelt's subsequent use of this vicious law to hound and persecute strikers. Truman's opposition to the

Taft-Hartley bill was similarly hypocritical and perfunctory. He made no attempt to crush the bill in the egg. When it was reported out of committee he did not lift a finger to stop it. During the long months it was discussed in Congress he did not utter a word of protest. While the Taft-Hartley bill was gathering momentum, Truman made no attempt whatsoever to mobilize opposition. He even permitted the rumor to circulate freely that he had no real objections to the bill. He maintained his equivocal silence up to the last possible minute, thus covertly encouraging the most rabid, labor-hating political representatives of Wall Street in Congress.

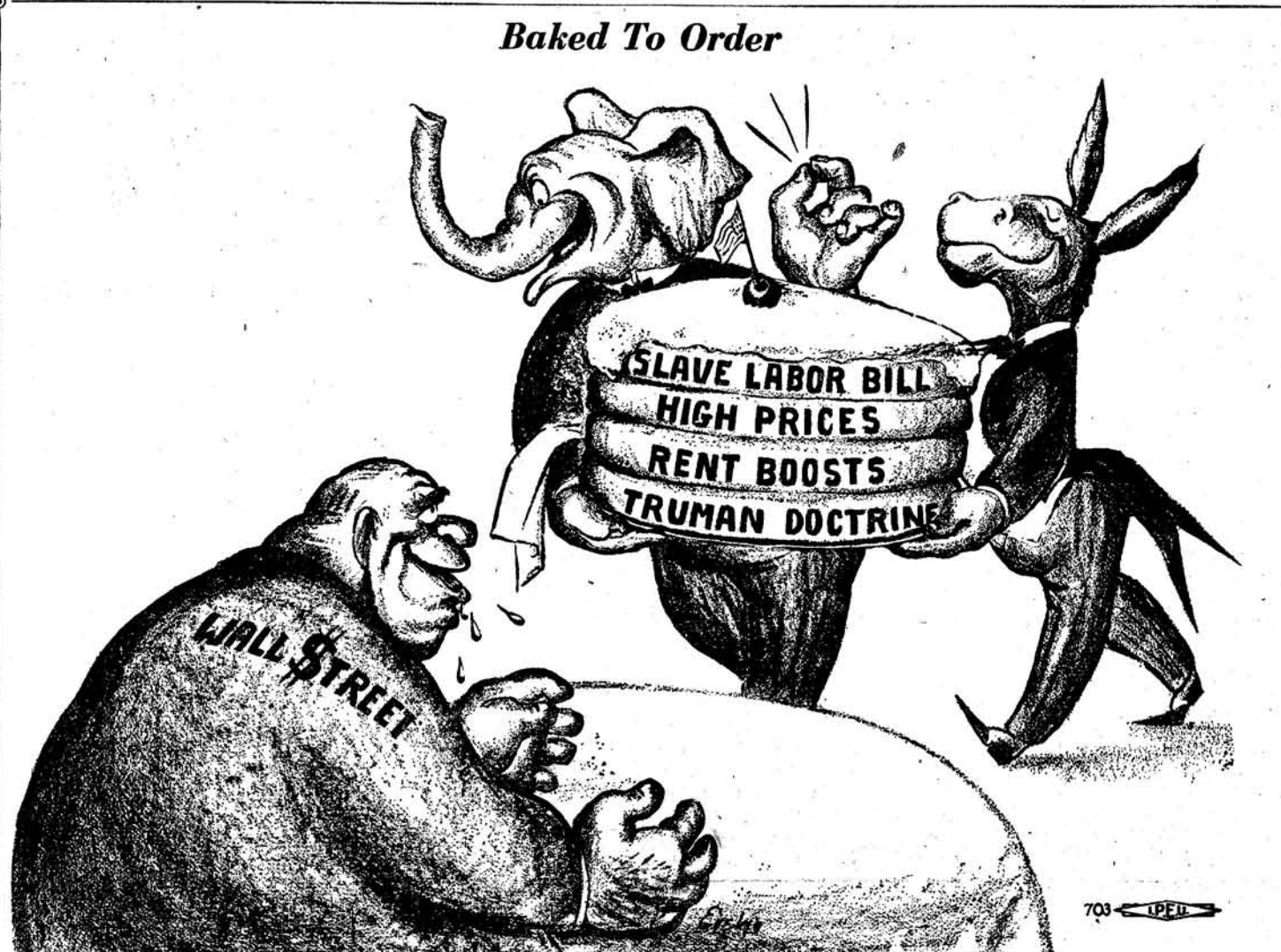
Truman's failure to mobilize the Democratic Party against the Taft-Hartley bill was consistent with his entire course in office. In December 1945, he tried to break the General Motors strike by ordering the union workers to get back on the job. In his "State of the Union" speech, January 3, 1946, he demanded a tough anti-labor law. When the railroad workers struck a year ago, Truman commandeered the railways and called a special joint session of Congress to demand the passage of a law empowering him to draft strikers and force them to work at the point of the bayonet.

During the subsequent maritime strike, he threatened to use the Navy to break it. When Congress passed the Case bill, Truman vetoed it but in the same breath again called for legislation to draft strikers.

Truman added to this consistent anti-labor record last winter when he mobilized all the forces of government to smash the strike of the coal miners. Who can forget the strikebreaking injunction and the \$3,500,000 fine levied on the miners?

Last January when Congress assembled, Truman again called for anti-labor legislation and proclaimed his readiness to back the Republican majority in Congress. He proved that he meant what he said by signing the notorious law to undermine the Fair Labor Standards Act and rob millions of working men of the portal-to-portal back pay due them.

In the light of this record, Truman cannot be considered a friend of labor by any stretch of the imagination.



Congress Vote Shows Reactionary Character Of Democratic Party

While Truman's veto message was being read to the House June 20, a group of Democratic Representatives broke out a sack of peanuts and cracked them under the eyes of packed galleries as nonchalantly as monkeys in a zoo. When the reading ended, the faint applause of an individual or two was drowned in a roar of derisive boos. Then these political representatives of the capitalist class rubber-stamped the anti-labor law demanded by Wall Street.

It was a foregone conclusion that the Republicans would stand virtually to a man for Big Business and against labor. But what about the Democrats who have pretended since the beginning of the New Deal that they were interested in the welfare of the "common man"?

They voted 106 to 71 in the House for the Taft-Hartley slave-labor bill and 20 to 22 in the Senate. That decisive vote should remove the last lingering doubt any worker might entertain about the character of the Democratic Party. Do you recall the campaign promises of the Democrats last election? How

they were "friends" of labor? Do you remember how the labor bureaucrats, the Stalinists — all the fakers and traitors — claimed you had to vote for the Democrats to stem the tide of reaction?

They made those promises to fool gullible workers into voting for them. Once in office, the Democrats tossed their campaign propaganda in the ashcan. And when the most ruthless piece of anti-labor legislation in decades was ground to razor sharpness by the Republicans, a majority of Democrats — a big majority — joined them with shouts of approval. 126 Democrats helped swing the axe aimed at labor's neck.

Workers who understand how political parties serve class interests were not taken in by the election propaganda of the Democratic Party. They knew that both the Republican and Democratic machines are political instruments of Wall Street. They understand how the two-party merry-go-round is designed to entice the workers into taking another ride. And they called for labor to break from both the

capitalist parties and begin organizing an independent labor party.

The Democratic Party succeeded in fooling great numbers of workers with its "New Deal." During the depths of the depression, when the working class threatened to move in the direction of socialism, Roosevelt granted a few concessions and claimed credit for victories made by labor despite his efforts to knife their struggle.

In 1937 when the workers in Little Steel stood on picket lines facing the brutal steel barons, Roosevelt delivered his famous denunciation of labor: a plague on both your houses! That was how he really felt toward the "common man."

When he took the country into World War II despite his election promise "again and again and again" not to send American boys overseas to die on foreign battlefields, the pro-labor demagoguery of the New Deal was scrapped. The Democratic Party, with big majorities in both Houses of Congress, passed one reactionary law after another. They spearheaded the drive

against labor and laid the basis for the Taft-Hartley bill. It is sufficient to recall the Smith Gag Act, the dictatorial powers that were granted Roosevelt, the Smith-Connelly strikebreaking Act, and so on.

Under the Democratic Party the government seized plants, mines, railways and shipyards for no other purpose but to break strikes and assure the capitalists the highest profits in all history.

The Democratic Party has continued this reactionary course since the war. They wiped out the last remaining price controls and paved the way for the highest prices this country has ever seen. On top of the mountainous war profits, they gave billions in tax rebates to Big Business. They imposed high taxes on the low income brackets.

And what the Democrats failed to do would make a volume by itself. Ask any veteran what they accomplished in the way of providing housing. Ask any poor person in the South what they did about the poll tax system, Jim Crow, or lynch murder.

Workers Have Lost Battle, But They Can Win The War

By The Editors

Millions of workers gritted their teeth in white-hot anger as the Democratic and Republican parties united this week to give the plutocracy its first major victory over the working masses since the end of the war.

A venal, prostituted Congress has struck the labor movement from ambush, killing reforms, strangling progress, seeking to condemn American labor to defenseless poverty.

With the passage of the Taft-Hartley Bill, the Truman Doctrine is being applied directly at home as well as abroad. The Wall Street whip that lashes the worker in Tokyo and terrorizes the peasant in Greece is now cracking at the backs of American workmen in New York and San Francisco. The deadly menace of the Taft-Hartley Act hangs over Detroit and other industrial centers as the atomic bomb hangs over Moscow and the whole world.

How stunning is this blow! Only yesterday there were laws on the statute books safeguarding the elementary democratic rights of the organized labor movement. Today the open shop is back. Injunctions are back. Forced arbitration is back. Litigation against unions is back. Manhunts against the militants are back. Overnight the clock of labor legislation has been pushed back twenty-five years. In Wall Street, there is jubilation.

How was Wall Street able to win this victory? Why were 15 million union men and women impotent to stay the hand of Congressional cut-throats? Because this giant of American labor was armed by its leaders with nothing but paper weapons—wads of postcards and telegrams to fling at Congress.

While the lackeys of Big Business were grinding out the anti-labor law, the cowardice and treachery of the top leadership of the union movement prevented the workers from taking unified militant action. Murray, Lewis and Green threw themselves at the mercy of the Democratic Party, staking everything on a Presidential vote — and the workers lost!

What shall be done now? Labor's anger is bound to flare into resistance. But it is not enough. Only if the labor movement is purged of illusions and cleansed of misleaders and liars can this harsh defeat become the starting point for a new struggle that will lead to victory.

An era is closed. It was the era of fighting on the picket lines but crawling at the polls. It was the era of keeping labor chained to the Democratic Party.

The crime of the labor leaders lay in blessing this political party which helped forge the chains for the unions. No shouts of "betrayal" can cover up this crime.

Truman paved the way for Taft. The Democrats marched down the bi-partisan road, with the Republicans, to defeat the veto. And all the while, Murray and Green strained might and main not to safeguard the unions — but to salvage Truman's reputation!

They provided cheap publicity for this friend of the railroad magnates, coal barons and meat kings; this benefactor of Franco, Peron, Chiang Kai-shek and the King of Greece; this political bedfellow of Rankin, and Bilbo.

Will these labor leaders learn? Not one whit more than did their kind in Germany who led the workers first into the camp of the German Roosevelts, next to the camp of the German Trumans and finally to Hitler's concentration camp.

Will the labor leaders support a militant policy to defy and defeat the slave-labor act? Already they are trying to persuade the workers not to place the unions in legal jeopardy, but to rely on the courts for its nullification — the same courts which are the servants of Wall Street; the same courts which upheld Truman in breaking the mine strike last year. They have always preferred the courtroom to the picket line.

Already they are talking about repeating their suicidal policy of electing "good" capitalist politicians—who can be relied upon only to stab labor in the back. In 1948 they will draw a curtain around 1947 and beat the drums once again for Truman and the Democratic Party. To follow them is to follow the Judas-goats to the slaughter pens.

The hour has struck for action—POLITICAL ACTION! Along with the fight to nullify the Taft-Hartley Act must go the struggle to drive out of Congress the two capitalist parties which enacted it.

This is the lesson of this grim hour: Fifteen million workers are as weak as one unless they are organized in their own class party based on a fighting program.

It is not too late for labor to enter as an independent force in the 1948 elections. Right now is the time for all unions, CIO, AFL and independent, to convene a Conference of Labor to nominate labor's own candidates for the Presidency and Congress. Such a Labor Conference, held in time, might have stopped the Taft-Hartley Bill. Now it must be held to curb the evil workings of this law and mobilize the forces to repeal it.

The labor movement has suffered a defeat—but it is far from smashed. The monarchs of the dollar will yet learn that it takes more than a law to crush the workers' organizations. They will learn that it was easier to pass this law than to enforce it. They will learn that a law like this, passed in Great Britain in 1927, became the prod for a reawakening and a rearming that eventually drove the British Liberal-Democrats and Tory-Republicans out of the government and brought the Labor Party to power. They will learn this because the workers will teach them.

Labor has lost a battle. But labor will win the war!

Appeasement Policy Paved Way To Labor Defeat

By Art Preis

How does it happen that a few hundred political representatives of the tiny Wall Street gang have dared to pass legislation aimed to cripple the unions of 15,000,000 organized American workers? How does it happen that the mighty American labor movement, which a year and a half ago in massive strikes brought the most powerful corporations to terms, could not halt the brazen class legislation just passed by Congress? Certainly there has been no want of capacity or will among the workers for the most resolute and militant struggle. Their sentiments were clearly expressed in vast outpourings at local mass

meetings and parades, in the numerous resolutions for a 24-hour national protest strike, in the torrential tide of demand of hundreds of thousands of telegrams and letters to the White House and Congress. The union ranks were ready to back a real fight to the hilt. But they were thwarted at every turn by the craven and treacherous policies of the top union leaders.

The labor bureaucrats feared and sabotaged united, militant mass struggle. They followed the formula of appeasement, of pleading at back doors.

True enough, the union leaders voiced verbal protest against the Taft-Hartley bill. But they made no real effort to mobilize the millions of American work-

ers for decisive, effective, nationwide action. They turned deaf ears to the pleas of the rank and file for a nation-wide protest strike. They went so far as to oppose and sabotage the last-minute spontaneous efforts of local unionists to organize a caravan march on Washington.

The Murrays and Greens made blustering threats of what they are going to do in the next elections to those Congressmen who voted for the Taft-Hartley bill. But this didn't cause a ripple in Congress. The Republican and Democratic agents of Wall Street knew in advance that the union leaders still support the capitalist two-party system. They are tied politically to the capitalist parties and politicians and oppose

real independent labor political action.

Thus, the union bureaucrats had no program of political action to mobilize the workers for a grand-scale political counter-attack. They offered the workers no political instrument of their own, a labor party, to fight the Taft-Hartley bill on the political arena and to drive all its sponsors and adherents out of Washington.

First, the union leaders tried to appease the Congressional labor-haters by accepting scaled-down wage settlements, such as Murray put over in steel. They made no-strike pacts like the AFL building trades moguls. They retreated all along the economic front. But this only whet-

ted the appetite of Big Business and its political agents.

As Congress became more brazen and arrogant in its preparations to shove through the union-busting bill, the union leaders tried to stem the offensive exclusively through their usual methods of pulling strips in Washington, button-holing individual Congressmen, sending letters and petitions that found their way into capital wastebaskets.

Finally, their efforts were confined to a last-minute dependence upon Truman for a veto and the hope of swinging seven votes in the Senate to uphold this veto. Now that Truman has made his grand-stand veto gesture, the union leaders — Green, Murray,

Dubinsky, Reuther, Whitney — all join the chorus of praise for Truman. They are preparing the lure to lead the labor flock back into the discredited Democratic fold in 1948.

William Green said labor would fight to abolish the Taft-Hartley bill, if it became law, if it took "50 or even 100 years." If the policies of the present union leaders are pursued, there will be no labor movement at all in far shorter time than that.

Once more the labor bureaucrats have demonstrated — and in the most crucial moment of all — that their methods of class collaboration and appeasement are a brake on the labor movement. They are banner-bearers only of defeats.

