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Taft-Hartley Law Threatening Labor Peace

COUNCIL STATEMENT PLEDGES RENEWED DRIVE TO REPEAL LAW, DEFEAT REACTIONARY SPONSORS; WARNS ON CLAIMS FOR LAW'S SUCCESS.

"When present collective bargaining contracts expire," the council said, "the most difficult period in the history of labor relations in this country threatens to ensue."

urging the labor movement to redouble its efforts to fight against the forces of reaction and ward off further efforts to curb union activities, the council declared:

"We know that if the forces of reaction are returned to power next November, they will proceed at once to renew their war against labor by enacting a ban against nation-wide collective bargaining, by outlawing all health and welfare funds for workers and by making unions subject to anti-trust prosecutions.

"We know that labor cannot live and endure the Taft-Hartley Act and that the basic policy of its sponsors is to stifle progress in America."

The full text of the council statement follows:

"The sponsors of the Taft-Hartley Act are preparing to acclaim it as a success next month, when it becomes 6 months old. Seeking to escape the political consequences of their actions, they are hoping to make the American people believe that the Taft-Hartley Act has reduced strikes and improved labor-management relations.

"The workers of this country will not be misled by such statistical illusions. They know that the comparative lull in strikes during the past few months has been caused by the signing of new contracts last August which in many industries postponed the evil effects of the Taft-Hartley Act for a year or more.

"In fact, America is now experiencing a lull before the storm. When present collective bargaining contracts expire, the most difficult period in the history of labor relations in this country threatens to ensue.

"The signs are unmistakable. Perhaps the most dramatic instance to date has been the experience of the International Typographical Union in attempting to negotiate new contracts with publishers during recent weeks. Testimony before the National Labor Relations Board by both union and employer representatives is in complete agreement on the fact that the present rupture of amicable and co-operative labor-management relations in this country is due entirely to the harsh provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act. If there were no such law, both sides could have agreed on new contracts long ago, as they have for many, many years.

"Instead, we find a government agency—the National Labor Relations Board—prosecuting this stable, progressive and public

spirited trade union because the law makes it well-nigh impossible for the union to obtain the traditional type of security which it must have for the protection of its members.

"Government prosecutions of the legitimate activities of unions now threatens to break out into a rash all over the nation. Already injunction suits have been filed against several organizations and employers, in some instances, have taken advantage of the new law's provisions to file damage suits against unions.

"How anyone can expect to function and industrial production to proceed smoothly when labor-management relations are tied up with legal red tape is beyond reason and common sense.

"The Executive Council feels constrained to point out these unpleasant facts because the enemies of labor are determined to attempt to remove the Taft-Hartley Act as an issue of the 1948 elections.

"Organized labor will never let the professional politicians get away with that.

"We know that if the forces of reaction are returned to power next November, they will proceed at once to renew their war against labor by enacting a ban against nation-wide collective bargaining, by outlawing all health and welfare funds for workers and by making unions subject to anti-trust prosecutions.

"We know that labor cannot live and endure under the Taft-Hartley Act and that the basic policy of its sponsors is to stifle progress in America.

"Therefore, the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor hereby reemphasizes its determination to carry on the fight against the Taft-Hartley Act until it is repealed and to campaign against the sponsors and supporters until they are defeated. With the support of all American workers and their friends, we are confident that these goals can be achieved in the 1948 elections and that our government will receive an unmistakable mandate to go forward to greater progress and not backward to reaction and oppression."

AFL AIR LINE PILOTS SIGN NEW AGREEMENT
New York City. — The AFL's Air Line Pilots Association and United Air Lines signed a new contract governing pay and working conditions for the company's 1,000 pilots.

The contract provides that a senior officer flying 80 hours a month, half day, half night, in a DC-3 will receive \$909, and if flying a DC-6 in overwater operations will receive \$1,266 a month. The rate for the same officer on a DC-6 run in the United States will be \$1,186.

Taft-Hartley Law Exposed!

By J. ALBERT WOLL and HERBERT S. THATCHER
(Members of the law firm of Padway, Woll, Thatcher, Glenn and Wilson, serving as general counsel for the American Federation of Labor)

This is the eighth of a series of articles to be published by the AFL Weekly News Service in refutation of an article appearing in the Saturday Evening Post which praised the Taft-Hartley law to the skies. Author of the Post article was J. Mack Swigert, law partner of Senator Robert A. Taft—enough said:

NO. 8—THE "SO-CALLED 14 PRIVILEGES" OF THE TAFT-HARTLEY LAW—(Continued)

13. "Escape From Forced Political Contributions"

The thirteenth "privilege" which has descended upon workers under the Taft-Hartley Act is the privilege of not being able to use the funds of their union, even though they so desire, for the purpose of disseminating information regarding the voting records and qualifications of federal political candidates.

The framers of the Taft-Hartley Act, not content with reversing the philosophy underlying the Wagner Act, have attempted to perpetuate their new order by making it difficult, if not impossible, for organized labor to seek to defeat them at the polls and to install in their places legislators equipped with better understanding of the nature of our economy. The act makes it unlawful for labor unions to make any "expenditure" on behalf of or against any political candidate, and the sponsor of this provision explained that it was intended to muzzle the union press, in so far as it was used to seek the election of labor's friends and the defeat of its enemies.

While it is true that corporations are also prohibited from making political expenditures, there are no such restrictions upon political expenditures by em-

ployer associations such as local or national chambers of commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers; Liberty Leagues, etc. Further, it is one thing to prohibit a corporation operating for private profit from making a political expenditure, and another to deny such privilege to labor organizations which are non-profit voluntary associations of working people, one of whose prime purposes, unlike corporations, is the securing of legislation beneficial to the working people of this country.

Organized labor was primarily responsible for such constructive legislation as child labor laws, minimum and maximum hour laws, workmen's compensation acts, social security laws and the like. While individuals are permitted to make political expenditures under the act, it is obvious that employers are able to utilize this privilege much more effectively than individual workers whose income is greatly more limited than the income of corporate officers. It is only through small joint contributions of many individual employees associated together in a small organization that the rights of the individuals to make contributions can have any practical meaning.

Total Industrial Production Drops; Goods Output Rises

Washington, D. C. — Industrial production failed to maintain the post-war record level attained in November and declined slightly during December, the Federal Reserve Board reported.

In another section of its report, the board said that department stores sales for the last three months of 1947 were 9 per cent greater than for the corresponding period in 1946, but that for the first half of January store sales "showed somewhat more than the usual seasonal decline."

Output of the nation's factories and mines was listed on its production index at 91 per cent above the 1935-39 average in December again 92 per cent in November and 90 in October.

Despite the general decline, activity in durable goods industries continued to advance in December to a new post-war peak. The

board said these factors played an important part:

1. Iron and steel production reached the highest rate of the year in December and continued to increase in the first half of January.

2. Assembly of passenger cars increased further in December and production for the year was about 3,600,000 cars compared with 2,200,000 in 1946 and 3,800,000 in 1941. Output of trucks in 1947 was the highest on record.

3. Production of freight cars in December reached 9,800 units "which virtually met the goal established for the industry last spring."

Gains in durable goods were offset, the board said, by a "slight decline" in nondurable goods output "largely because holiday influences reduced production in a few lines such as cotton textiles and paperboard."

Morse Says Dice Loaded By Labor Law

Washington, D. C. — Senator Wayne L. Morse of Oregon, in an article appearing in "Everybody's Digest," a widely read monthly magazine, declared the Taft-Hartley law "loads the dice against our working people," and called for its repeal.

Senator Morse's presentation of labor's viewpoint stands out like a shining light in a maze of articles widely publicized by leading magazines in which so-called impartial authors over-exerted themselves to show the many "blessings" accorded labor by the Taft-Hartley law.

The Oregon Senator started his article by pointing out that throughout the long history of the labor movement in this country every demand made by the nation's workers has met with consistent and often violent opposition.

"Then after each gain had been won historians and people generally looked back and agreed that labor's so-called 'demands' were just and necessary," he said.

"Go back as far as you like, the story is, always the same. Even labor's long fight for free education was bitterly denounced. As for the right to organize and bargain collectively, there is still a powerful minority of labor-hating employers who want no part of it. Unfortunately their attitude is reflected in sections of the Taft-Hartley Act."

Many members of Congress who voted for the act, Morse said, are now admitting it has dangerous provisions which "must be changed." He called that "a rather sorry confession" from "supposedly responsible legislators."

The only real way to amend the act now "would be to repeal it," Morse insisted. He charged that the bill "was designed not only to curb certain abuses but to weaken labor's position at the bargaining table."

"It weights the economic scales against millions of Americans who depend on wages and salaries for their livelihood," he stressed.

Then Morse listed some of the "more glaring imperfections" in the law.

"It invites a return to government by injunction," he said.

"Every effort to achieve collective bargaining, every strike can be met and defeated by destructive lawsuits in the courts."

"There are so many grounds for litigation under this act, that hostile employers can keep a union treasury bankrupt. Add the inevitable delays that legal procedures involve and you have

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