

## From Bad to Worse

### Taft-Hartley's Section 14-b continues to spawn phony state "right-to-work" laws

Ten years ago, the Taft-Hartley Act was passed by Congress. A decade of experience has shown that this law, in case after case, has been an obstacle to the organization of workers into unions, a means whereby many employees have checked the efforts of working people to win an American standard of living, and a weapon to beat down wages and working conditions.

Some employers, however, are not satisfied merely with the anti-labor features of the Taft-Hartley law. They want to go further, seeking laws on a state level to restrict labor, to get lower wages and worse working conditions.

At present, 17 states have laws aimed at virtually outlawing effective unions. These laws are made possible by Section 14 (b) of the Taft-Hartley Act, giving each state the right to go beyond the Taft-Hartley law in strangling unionism.

Right now, an attempt is being made to pass such a law in Delaware and Maryland; efforts also are being made in other states. This movement goes under the innocent name of "right-to-work."

That innocent name is the hungry anti-union wolf in sheep's clothing. Every worker should learn to know the well-disguised beast

#### THE PHONY NAME

What's in a Name?

For instance, take a name like "right-to-work." If a measure called a "law to lower wages" were proposed in your state, every worker would want to vote against it.

If a bill called "law to weaken union pension plans" were proposed in your state, workers would vote against it.

If legislation called a "law to let employers fire workers for any reason at all" were proposed in your state, workers would vote against it.

If a bill called a "law for a longer work week without extra pay" were proposed in your state, workers would vote against it.

But when a law is proposed in a state to do all of these things, and its sponsors put a name like "right-to-work" Bill on it, many workers and other citizens are tricked into voting for such a law.

It is important for workers to see through the phony name and learn the brutal facts about the so-called right-to-work laws.

In effect, these "right-to-work" laws aim at bringing about:

LOWER WAGES

LONGER WORK WEEK

WEAKENED UNION WELFARE PLANS FOR THE ILL, THE AGED, THE HOSPITALIZED

For workers, therefore, the "right-to-work" bills are really right-to-suffer bills.

The name is so phony that in the states of Washington and Idaho, the courts would not permit the sponsors of this anti-labor proposal to use the label "right-to-work." The court said that this name was "misleading" and "inaccurate."

DOES NOT GUARANTEE WORK

The one thing that these "right-to-work" bills do not guarantee is the right to work. Suppose you lose your job. Would this law give you the right to work in another job? Of course not. This law does not create jobs. It does not say that an employer must give you a job. It does not say that the government must give you a job. It says absolutely nothing about seeing to it that you stay on the job.

The "right-to-work" bills actually do just the opposite. This bill would give another worker the right to throw you out of work if he would be ready to do the job for less pay, for less fringe benefits, for no vacation, for a longer work week without extra pay.

Union members in most states are protected in their pay, their jobs, their benefits by the fact that the other workers in the factory – also union members – are working under the same conditions. The "right-to-work" bills would outlaw the union shop and would give the employer the power to endanger the job and the standards of every union worker by employing whom he wants, when he wants, without regard to union membership.

That's why cut-throat employers favor the "right-t-work" bills. That's why unions, workers, top leaders of the Republican and Democratic Party, religious leaders and the present Secretary of Labor oppose "right-to-work" laws.

CAN MEAN UNEMPLOYMENT

"Right-to work" laws, instead of meaning work, can mean unemployment.

America's high unemployment is bound up with high wages. The worker with money in his pocket is a good customer. His buying power keeps the wheels of industry spinning.

Anything that drags down wages of the American worker drags down buying pwoer – and with it, everyone's economic standards.

If a worker's wage is cut, he has less to spend on milk and corn and bread and vegetables and meat – and that hurts the farmer.

If a worker's wage is cut, he has less to spend on clothes and utensils and toys – and that hurts the retailer, the storekeeper.

If a worker's wage is cut, he has less to spend on medicine and doctors.

If a worker's wage is cut, he cannot even pay a fair share in taxes toward maintaining the town – and that means inadequate police and fire protection, poor sanitation and bad roads.

The "right-to-work" laws, by undermining wages, threaten everybody. Above all, by endangering steady buying power, the "right-to-work" laws hurt employment and jobs, and become laws to guarantee no work, instead of work

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Despite the frenzied, well-financed efforts by enemies of labor to finagle people into believing that "right-to-work" bills really mean the right to work, such bills have been defeated in the states of Washington, Colorado, Kentucky, Idaho, Indiana, Missouri, Connecticut, Massachusetts and California.

In other states, where the "right-to-work" laws were passed, the people woke up soon and proceeded to repeal these laws. This happened in Maine, New Hampshire and Louisiana.

Here's what you can do:

1. Learn the facts on the "right-to-work" law, so you really understand it.
2. Explain it to your friends.
3. Let your legislative representatives know how you feel about it, if anyone proposes such a law.
4. Make sure you register to vote and make sure you vote for people who believe in a strong America resting on a solid base of steady work and good wages.

Prepared with cooperation of ILGWU Political Dept.

## WHAT THEY SAY

"When employers and unions representing a majority of their employees agree on a union shop, they should have the right to have one. Seventeen states have enacted laws which deprive unions and employers from making such agreements. They call these 'right-to-work' laws, but that is not what they really are. Actually, these are laws which make it impossible for an employer to bargain collectively with a majority of his employees about the security of their union...I oppose such laws categorically."

James P. Mitchell - Secretary of Labor

"The bill disregards the voluntary developments in the field of industrial relations in the United States over the past 150 years. Today, over 11 million workers are employed under some type of union security contract. The great majority of the plants which have such union security provisions have had few strikes."

Harry S. Truman - Former President

"This so-called 'right-t-work' legislation would deprive employees of the right to join a union and negotiate for a union shop...The question involved in this legislation is government interference with the independence of both management and labor to negotiate whatever kind of contract they may agree upon."

Alfred M. Landon - Republican candidate for President in 1936

"The 'right-to-work' bill is a misnomer, because it actually denies what it pretends to give, namely, the right to work. It is reactionary because it nullifies all that has been accomplished in our state through the organized labor movement for the mutual benefit of working classes and the stability of industry."

Most. Rev. Francis Rummel - Archbishop of New Orleans

"The so-called 'right-to-work' law is designed to impair the right to organize freely, and to undermine the collective bargaining process. In legislating against the union shop, these states have simply made it possible for employers to hire non-union workers in order to depress wages and working conditions as they please. The right to work law is a fraud..."

Rabbi E. J. Lipman - Commission on Social Action, Union of American Hebrew Congregations

"We believe that compulsory union membership should be neither required nor forbidden by law. Decision should be left to agreement by management and labor...Where either the closed or union shop emerges, with proper safeguards, as a result of collective bargaining, we believe the agreement arrived at on this point should be approved and supported by church people."

Executive Committee - Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America.

[photograph of a court room]

Local anti-labor law in Fayetteville, Tenn., caused mass arrests and trials of strikers, suppression of all picketing.

[United States map indicating which states have repealed the "right-to-work" law]

Repeal of "right-to-work" law in Louisiana last year by union efforts left 17 still on state books.