

REPEAL SECTION 14(b) OF THE TAFT-HARTLEY ACT END THE TYRANNY OF THE "RIGHT-TO-WORK" LAWS!

General Baker, Jr.



WORKERS PRESS



Chicago, IL 60624
 Merchandise Dept.
 PO Box 2774
 22¢ (50¢ year mailed)
 2nd class postage paid

. . . The development of USNA imperialism—its assuming an international character—was paced with the development of the national character of the Negro question. The keystone of revolution is the resolution of the Negro question, just as this question is the keystone to the introduction of fascism in the United States of North America as a whole.

History has repeatedly proven that any attempt of the Anglo-American working class to move forward and not take full account of the Negro question is doomed to failure. The sorry history of the C.I.O. is proof enough.

Nelson Peery
The Negro National Colonial Question

Copyright 1977 by
Workers Press
P.O. Box 3774
Chicago, Illinois 60654

Preface

Our country is in grave danger.

Not since the stormy 1930s and 1940s, when millions of working men and women fought tooth and nail against the employers' attempt to kill the trade union movement, has organized labor been under such a forceful attack.

Even the most casual observer of the "American scene" has noted the shifting of huge industrial enterprises to the unorganized South. Perhaps the challenge to the narrow profit-hungry capitalists to deny thousands of workers a decent wage will be the thing that turns the whole labor movement around.

Every major union in this country has repeatedly given lip service to "organizing the unorganized." Well, the organized labor movement has only grown 1% in the last 20 years, while industry in many Southern states has grown 100% or more! The high sounding phrases of the union leaders have never matched their deeds. The tactic of relying upon the employers to defeat the employers has gotten the working class nowhere.

In the past most major unions pledged themselves to defeating Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act. It is true that an effective struggle in the legislative arena must be made to repeal 14(b); however, this cannot be done by relying on the careerist politicians.

As many workers know, during the 1976 election I had the opportunity to run for a seat in the Michigan State House of Representatives as a candidate of the Communist Labor Party. In that election every effort was made by the politicians acting for the giant auto corporations to keep the Communist Labor Party and my name off the ballot. This is in a state where the unions and politicians of the Democratic Party walk hand-in-hand—yet compare their frenzied effort to keep me off the ballot with their careful disregard of action against Taft-Hartley. Can it be clearer that the most important union leaders are more concerned with their ties to the Democrats and the supremacy of the Democratic Party than they are with the welfare of the rank-and-file, and the working class as a whole?

This pamphlet is a brief examination of the importance of repealing Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act, and in doing so organizing the workers in the Southern and Southwestern sections of our country. Only when all the workers are organized and have

equality in wages and conditions, will we be a truly united working class able to call together our full strength.

G.B.

Introduction

Workers today are being put in a position of begging and grovelling for a handful of jobs being doled out by the capitalists. In 1950 the workforce at the Ford Rouge auto plant in Detroit stood at 80,000; today that figure stands at 25,000. The loss of jobs can be seen in every major and small industry in the Northern portion of our country. An important reason for this is Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act. This section of the Taft-Hartley Act allows states to enact so-called "right-to-work" laws. This law has been used in the South to cripple union organizing, and contributes greatly to the impotence of the Northern unions in their efforts to protect their members from unemployment and low wages. Unless this law is repealed, the Northern workers face the weakening of their unions and an increase in the loss of jobs.

The Northern workers must unite with the Southern workers in their efforts to unionize, or they will find themselves in the same boat sinking under the weight of anti-union tactics and legislation that robs them both of the life they deserve. Moreover, the battle to repeal Section 14(b) is more than just economics—it is a struggle for human rights. It is a continuation of the struggle against slavery, begun over a century ago, for the workers who suffer most are those in the South's "Black Belt," particularly the Negro workers.

The Flight of Industry to the South

The year 1976 was a crucial year for organized labor. Well over five million workers renegotiated their contracts. Every major union found itself in a difficult bargaining position. Wage gains and gains around job security and health and safety fell far short of their goals. One of the main reasons for this is the ability of the capitalist employers to weaken the strength of the unions. The unions found themselves in a weaker position because of the ability of the capitalists to move whole factories to areas where labor is cheaper and unorganized. These areas are in the South and Southwest parts of our country where "right-to-work" laws are in effect.

These "right-to-work" laws are misnamed. These laws have nothing to do with the rights of working people to secure a decent living and protect no one but the profit-hungry capitalists.

The name itself is a lie designed to appeal to the democratic

'Right-to-work' States

■ RTW law □ No RTW law



Ranking of States-Lowest to Highest Hourly Wage
(*right to work states)

State	1974 Wage	% Workers Unionized 1972
1. Mississippi*	\$3.18	12.6
2. North Carolina*	\$3.28	7.5
3. Arkansas*	\$3.30	16.4
4. New Mexico	\$3.33	13.2
5. South Carolina*	\$3.33	9.0
11. Florida*	\$3.74	13.9
15. North Dakota*	\$3.83	16.1
16. Texas*	\$4.08	13.5
42. Illinois	\$4.91	35.6
46. Ohio	\$5.12	34.8
49. Michigan	\$5.62	38.4

sentiments, fair play and decency of the working class. It is a law which can be passed by the individual states and which takes away the right to negotiate for a union shop. This is a shop in which every worker must belong to the union that has been voted for by the majority of the workers in the bargaining unit.

During the 1976 contract negotiations between the United Auto Workers and the "big three" auto makers, many issues were raised. One of the most important issues was job security, centering around the short work week. This demand came forward as the chief demand because of the widespread lay-offs and the increased speed-ups. On these very same issues the auto workers did not find themselves alone. The sister union of the U.A.W., the United Rubber Workers Union (U.R.W.), has suffered a tremendous loss of jobs due directly to the moving of rubber plants to the South.

Until recently, Akron, Ohio, was the rubber capital of our country. Since 1950 20,000 jobs have left and gone South, where labor is unorganized and consequently cheaper.

While Akron Goodyear workers average \$5.50 per hour, Tennessee rubber workers average \$3.89 per hour; Virginians, \$4.16; and Mississippians, \$3.90. Goodyear is making more money in the South while Akron workers are standing in unemployment lines!

During the contract negotiations at General Motors, the U.A.W. was successful in placing on the bargaining table G.M.'s so-called "Southern Strategy." G.M. has recently opened six new plants in Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama and Louisiana. These workers are affected by "right-to-work" laws and receive anywhere from \$2 to \$3 per hour less than Northern workers doing the same jobs, while receiving less benefits. The statement in the new G.M. contract, stating that the company would maintain a neutral position toward unionization of its plants, falls far short of the needs of the auto workers. It will take much more than neutrality clauses to organize these plants and bring the wages of the Southern workers up to the level of the North. The union must intensify its support of the Southern workers' unionization campaign with adequate funds and a larger organizing staff. Because the U.A.W. has industry-wide bargaining, the unionization of these workers would automatically increase their wages and raise their benefits to the level of Northern workers, while strengthening the unity of action of auto workers. As long as the capitalists can pay wages in the South that are on the average 25% lower than in the North, there is no reason to believe

that the companies will not continue their rapid exodus to the South. Lower wages, no unions or weak unions, insignificant property taxes, a growing consumer market and political instability in the colonies make the South the capitalists' first choice during this current flight of industry. Where unions in the North have not won industry-wide bargaining, the demand that protects the wages of the Northern worker and raises the living standard of the Southern worker must be for *Wage Parity*.

The threat of loss of jobs hangs like a dark cloud over the head of auto workers. The threatened closing of the Chrysler Jefferson Avenue Assembly Plant means more than the loss of 5,000 jobs because thousands of workers connected to the large industries would end up on the unemployment rolls. In the case of Jefferson Avenue it was the broad based support received by the Jefferson workers that has temporarily halted the hand of the factory owners. Where do these jobs go? Outside of the tremendous technological changes in auto that "kill" thousands of jobs, Brazil is one place. The assembly line worker in Brazil is paid between \$.84 and \$.93 an hour. The final inspector is paid \$1.45 an hour.

During January of this year, the Chrysler Corporation announced a \$54 million expansion program at its Mound Road Engine plant in Detroit. In order to begin this expansion, these capitalists demanded that the city of Detroit grant them a 12-year tax break or they would consider moving the plant to another location.

It has been only one year since the city of Detroit stood on the verge of financial collapse. Detroit General Hospital was threatening to close, the city shut down ten public schools, the Detroit Public Library shortened its hours and hundreds of city employees were laid off. Chrysler's offer is nothing less than blackmail. Their actions are no different than a hoodlum holding a gun to your head and demanding that you surrender your valuables. The mayor's office and Common Council were forced to accept this disgraceful blackmailing.

The capitalist executioners are slowly tightening the hangman's noose around the throat of organized labor and the industrial cities with the threat of the loss of jobs, lower wages and financial collapse. All because the South is kept unorganized through the use of terror and anti-labor laws.

Wages in "right to work" states

State	Year	Amount Below		Year	Amount Below		Loss	Right to Work Law Passed
		National Average	Wages		National Average	Wages		
Texas	1948	\$231		1974	\$496	\$265	1947	
Mississippi	1954	\$877		1974	\$1645	\$768	1954	
Alabama	1953	\$680		1974	\$1233	\$553	1953	
Arkansas	1948	\$555		1974	\$1248	\$693	1947	
South Carolina	1954	\$660		1974	\$1137	\$471	1954	

Where Did "Right-to-Work" Laws Come From?

At this point it is clear that the Taft-Hartley Act Section 14(b) and the various "right-to-work" laws that are based on it, represents no one other than the capitalists. The fight for legislation that protects the working man and woman is as old as our country, and goes back to the first American Revolution. Every time the working class has pushed forward, the capitalists have attempted to limit their gains through the use of their faithful politicians. Thus we see that the first "right-to-work" law in our country was passed in 1806. This law came directly from the British colonialists, against whom the workers fought and shed blood in order to gain their independence. The capitalists made it a criminal conspiracy to form a union. As late as 1836 patriotic shoemakers and tailors went to jail for conspiracy to raise wages.

In spite of these criminal laws the working class continued to fight to raise itself above the level of slaves. When the old laws no longer worked, the capitalists passed new ones. The injunction was developed in the 1860s and in 1894 was used to crush the railroad strike and to jail socialists, union organizers and union sympathizers.

The turn of the century (1900) found the working class movement on an upsurge with unions popping up everywhere. In 1901, alarmed by this growth of unions, the National Association of Manufacturers (N.A.M.), the National Metal Trades Association, the National Founders Association, and the American Anti-Boycott Association formed and led the open shop movement. These sworn enemies of the workers opposed all union legislation, and, in an effort to win public support away from unions, created what they called "right-to-work."

By the 1930s it was clear to a section of the capitalists that reforms must be made to stop the militancy of the workers and prevent them from questioning the capitalists' right to rule our country. The Norris La Guardia Act was passed, which gave workers their first legal right to organize. In 1933, the National Industrial Recovery Act, Clause 7a, gave the workers the right to collective bargaining and outlawed the "yellow dog" contract (signed oaths coerced from individuals swearing never to join a union). In 1935, the Wagner Act, the first National Labor Relations Act, passed with hostile opposition from the N.A.M.



The Taft-Hartley Act was passed over a Presidential veto.
A Pictorial History of American Labor Crown Pub.

It was during this period that the auto workers were making giant strides forward in organizing their union. By 1945, N.A.M. decided that workers were going too far. The campaign began to repeal all pro-labor laws. In 1947 the N.A.M. was successful in getting the Taft-Hartley Act passed which provided for enforcement of an 80-day "cooling off" period for strikes, banned secondary boycotts and sympathy strikes, and allowed companies to refuse to bargain with communists. The act also contained Section 14(b) which allowed "right-to-work" states within the country. Two years later, there were ten "right-to-work" states; by 1954 there were 16; and by 1963 there were 19. In 1976, Louisiana, the only Southern state without this criminal law, tragically entered the "right-to-work" column.

Today the fight for "right-to-work" laws and the repeal of all labor laws is being led by the National Right to Work Committee. The National Right to Work Committee is the mask that the N.A.M. wears in order to deceive our peoples. When we strip from their face these numerous masks we see the same tiny grouping of capitalists who have opposed any legislation that promises relief to the working class. Whether the N.A.M. uses local Chambers of Commerce, Industrial Development Commissions, or the state government itself, the fact is the same—the brutal cutting edge of the capitalist is organized around N.A.M. and N.A.M. is the mother and father of the so-called "right-to-work" laws.

Declining Union Membership

The capitalists know full well that the strength of the working class lies in its organized action. A Chamber of Commerce publication in 1954 stated, "the fundamental objective of compulsory unionism or union monopoly, after all, is simply the wielding of a bigger club in seeking concessions." These capitalists have the nerve to scream bloody murder against the threat of "monopoly" when they control all the banks, land, factories and intellectual life of our country. They know that without a union shop the union must devote its time and money to organizing the non-union members rather than protecting and advancing contract gains.

At the height of the drive to organize the garment workers at Farah in El Paso, Texas, 80% of the workers belonged to the union. Today only 30% of these workers belong to the union! How much leverage can any union have when only 3 out of 10 of the workers are members?

The capitalist class operates in its own self interest. The Taft-Hartley Act Section 14(b) was not proposed by a single worker, but against him. "Right-to-work" has opened the flood gates for industry to move to the South, where workers are daily threatened and coerced into resigning from their union.

As organized labor represents less of the working class in the growing industrial areas, the door is opened for further anti-labor legislation.

The capitalists take great pleasure in pointing to the fact that the unionization of the workforce is at an all time high of 26.2%. How can this represent a great leap forward from a level of 25.8% of the workers unionized in 1955? The industrialization of the "right-to-work" states has not been met with a corresponding unionization. Since 1950 non-farm jobs in the South have increased by 127% and yet today unions represent only 13.8% of the workforce.

The ability of the working class to attain decent working and living conditions will continue to be weakened as long as workers are not united through their union organizations.

In the South the use of legal and illegal terror against the Negro people and against union organizers and sympathizers helped to halt the union drives of the early 1930s. Today the rapid industrialization of the South is creating the conditions for the welding together of all Southern workers against the fascist terror and violent segregation that traces its history to the auc-

COMPARISON OF PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN WORKFORCE BY STATE TO PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN UNION MEMBERSHIP FROM 1964 TO 1974

State	Increase in Workforce	Change in Union Membership
Alabama*	33%	0.3%
Arizona*	54%	-1.5%
California	37%	-5.1%
Georgia*	39%	0.5%
Idaho	42%	-3.5%
Illinois	20%	-3.5%
Louisiana*	26%	-2.4%
Michigan	25%	-4.3%
Minnesota	35%	-8.7%
North Carolina*	40%	-0.5%
Texas*	45%	-1.1%
Utah*	40%	-3.1%
Virginia*	42%	-2.0%
West Virginia	18%	-6.5%

*Right-to-work States

This chart clearly shows the trend in union membership. While the number of workers in the workforce of the states listed has increased, the union membership in all but two of the states has declined.

Source of statistics: *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1976, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, July 1976.

tion block. As more and more industry develops in the South and thousands of Negro and Anglo-American workers are employed together in factories, they begin to fight together and embrace one another as class brothers. The "right-to-work" laws become the main legal road block the capitalists rely upon to keep the Southern worker "in his place" and prevent the unionization of the South.

Contract Negotiations

The eroding strength of the Northern unions is felt most acutely during contract negotiations. Because of declining union membership and high unemployment, the large industrial unions have been put in a weakened position when bargaining for strong contracts.

This weakened position can be seen in the contracts negotiated in 1976. The auto workers received a measly \$.36 increase. According to government figures, the wage increases of 1975 amounted to an increase of 8.1%, but in 1976 that increase had fallen to 7%.

Health and safety considerations have been reduced to an agreement that pays lip service to the question of workers' safety. While workers daily face the possibility of being killed on the job, the U.A.W. accepted a contract that provided nothing more than increased inspections, better medical reports and advice on harmful chemicals used in the production process. The real issues of health and safety hinge on speed-up, mandatory overtime and strict enforcement of safety measures.

With the technological advancements in industry today, there is no reason why a worker must fear the possibility of being killed or maimed for life while at work. More workers are killed or injured on the job in U.S. industry each year than soldiers killed or injured in any year of the Vietnamese War.

Even though 50,000 workers remained unemployed in the auto industry after the recession of 1973, speed-ups and mandatory overtime are the norm today. This situation has not benefited one single worker, it has only led to higher profits for companies that are already making millions of dollars from the sweat of our labor. How else could Ford Motor Company increase its profits to \$342.8 million after a "loss" in 1975? This profit was not the result of simply more cars being sold—it was accomplished by reducing the number of workers on the job, and making them

work harder. The main way the capitalists increase profits is by reducing the cost of labor. It is for this very reason that companies that operate in the South make a higher rate of profit.

Jobs for All

The working class of this country has a fighting, militant spirit that has been used effectively by the capitalists to their advantage. This spirit has been turned into competition between the workers themselves, and has promoted the self-destructive slogan of "each man for himself." No battle has even been won by each soldier fighting on his own without a unified effort. No struggle of the Northern worker would have been won without the unity found in the trade unions, and no battles against the capitalist exploiters will be won without that same unity of action by the entire working class. As long as workers who have a job don't fight for the workers who are unemployed, speed-up and mandatory overtime will remain a part of their lives. As long as the skilled worker refuses to support the unskilled production worker, he will always face the possibility of having his job robbed from him by technology and finding himself among the ranks of the unemployed, because the skilled jobs are always the first to be eliminated. As long as the Negro and Spanish-speaking workers are discriminated against, the Anglo-American worker will have to work for less pay, simply because the capitalist will replace him with a lower paid minority worker if he struggles alone for improved working conditions and better pay. The same is true for the competition between men and women workers and unionized and non-unionized workers. Our strength lies in united action, not competition!

It is the competition for jobs that has led to many of the divisions which exist within the working class today. This "scarcity" of jobs allows the capitalist to hold a club over our heads if we raise our voices to demand safer working conditions and decent wages.

Southern workers are not taking jobs away from Northern workers. It is the capitalists who are taking our jobs away. Not one Southern worker owns a factory in this country. Lynch rope terror, the violent segregation of the Negro, along with the harsh reality that for years the Southern workers have been unable to find steady work with decent wages, makes their organization more difficult.

Here the refusal of organized labor to consistently fight for the equality of the Negro worker holds the whole working class back and acts as a road block to the unity between the workers North and South. It is the struggle of the Negro worker in the North for social and economic equality that is the concrete link with the Negro worker in the South which ties the whole working class together. The unionization of the Southern workers is a key to the Negro workers' aspirations for social equality in the industrialized North.

The capitalists carefully use every one of these fears to keep the worker pinned to his machine. When he rebels there are millions of workers searching for work. Full employment is impossible as long as the capitalists run industry for bloody profits. Only under socialism can this age-old cry for jobs and social equality be realized and the gates to a bright happy future be opened. We must raise our voices in the demand for a job for every able bodied worker.

How Do We Fight For Repeal Of Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act?

The leaders of organized labor have paid lip service to fighting for repeal of Section 14(b). This "fighting" has mainly been through attempts to influence the legislative arena. Union leaders have tied the fate of millions of workers to the coat tails of the Democratic Party. The fate of this approach was made clear when the Congress, with its huge Democratic majority, defeated recent labor legislation such as the common situs picketing bill and the new minimum wage bill. The so-called "friends of labor" are obviously unfriendly to the working men and women of this country. The 1976 Democratic Party Platform pledge to work for repeal of Section 14(b) of Taft-Hartley, along with President Carter's campaign pledge to support such an effort are nothing but lies.

Lip service was bad enough on the part of the union leaders; however, now that their politician friends have ignored past promises, the new tactic is to completely surrender. Recently the AFL-CIO national leadership let it be known that they would not push for repeal of 14(b). Their justification was that they had made deals to get laws passed that would side-step the Taft-Hartley Act (such as the Thompson Bill, which supposedly strengthens the organizing rights sections of the National Labor Relations Act). In a similar move, the U.A.W. legislative action

office is pushing for a National Employment Priorities Act which will have provisions to temporarily block manufacturers from moving their plants to the South and Southwest; they've put out the word that this NEPA should be considered more important than repeal of 14(b). In other words, workers North and South should wait, again, on the "friends of labor" to be kind to us. Taft-Hartley has been law for 30 years, and the Democratic politicians have had 30 years to prove their friendship. Instead, all organized labor has gotten on this issue is a knife in the back.

The only way organized labor's influence in the legislative arena will be felt is if it is backed by the united strength of tens of millions of workers fighting this issue out on every front. The backbone of this effort must be the organized workers of the AFL-CIO, the U.A.W. and Teamsters. Through your locals, district and state councils, and national organizations the battle must be mounted at bargaining tables, on strike lines, in the organization of political muscle, and in the concrete support for unions engaged in the immediate struggle in the South and Southwest like the Clothing and Textile workers organizing effort at J.P. Stevens plants, the U.M.W.'s efforts at organizing Western coal miners, and the efforts of the Texas Farm Workers' Union (TFW).

The current struggle of the TFW is in the forefront of the battle to repeal Section 14(b). Their immediate aims are to establish an Agricultural Labor Relations Board, and to repeal Section 14(b). They realize that *union* means nothing unless it includes all the workers.

Repeal of Section 14(b) is a vital question for jobs, decent wages and working conditions. Repeal also has a bearing on the fight for social equality since the workers who are the first victims are the Negro and white Southern workers who live under the ghost of the slave auction block now appearing as the "right-to-work" laws; and the Mexican workers living with fear of starvation in Mexico or poverty on a barren farm; and the Indian workers tied to the tyranny of the reservations which are mainly located in "right-to-work" states. Repeal of 14(b) is an issue for the civil rights and equal rights organizations, for the organizations working for the rights of minorities, and for church and neighborhood groups concerned with justice, human dignity and welfare.

The Communist Labor Party calls on all people concerned with justice and equality to join in the fight to repeal Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act.

The Negro National Colonial Question

by
Nelson Peery
General Secretary,
Communist Labor Party

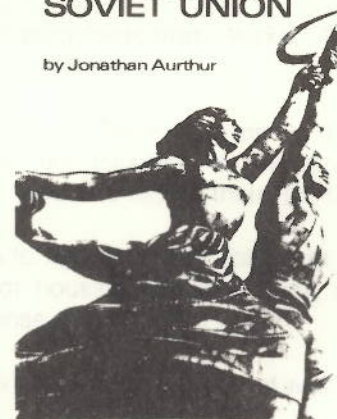


This Marxist-Leninist analysis is a landmark work. It gives a comprehensive analysis of both the general theoretical and political and social development of the Negro question from the times of slavery to the present. **WORKERS PRESS, \$2.95**

from
Vanguard Books
P.O. Box 3566
Chicago, IL 60654

SOCIALISM IN THE SOVIET UNION

by Jonathan Aurthur



In the period since the rise of N. Khrushchov and the Sino-Soviet split, the unity of the socialist camp has been torn between pro- and anti-Soviet sections. The theory of the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union is the product of this complex political situation. *Socialism in the Soviet Union* examines the Soviet economic and political system from the standpoint of the three basic categories of Marxism: philosophy, political economy, and politics. It is the first thorough, theoretical refutation of the theory of capitalist restoration, as well as a succinct, knowledgeable discussion of the nature of socialism in today's world.

\$4.95 paper

VANGUARD BOOKS

P.O. Box 3566
Chicago IL 60654



Read these other pamphlets from Workers Press on the struggle for jobs, peace, and equality

JOBS WITH PEACE . . . Ten million men and women without jobs and many more, not included in the official statistics, who cannot afford to feed and clothe their families.

What can we do to fight for jobs? Jobs that fill the needs of the working class for housing, medical care, and education—not jobs at the expense of peace.

What can we do to end unemployment and live in peace?

This pamphlet examines these questions and the serious economic crisis from the point of view of the working class and shows what we can do about these problems.

.15


JOBS, PEACE, EQUALITY, THE COMMUNIST LABOR PARTY . . . What is the Communist Labor Party? What does it stand for? Why should I support it, why should I buy its papers, pamphlets and books? This pamphlet answers these basic questions about the Communist Labor Party. It tells the origin and history of the Party and the difference between it and the Communist Party, USA. Also includes the Party Program.

.15

SUBSCRIBE TO . . .

The Political Paper of the Communist Labor Party of the United States of North America

People's Tribune



"The Communists' ideal should not be a trade-union secretary, but a **tribune of the people**, able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression." V.I. Lenin

order from:

PO Box 3774
Merchandise Mart
Chicago, IL 60654

\$6.00 a year, mailed
\$5.00 hand delivered