

ORGANIZED LABOR

H. R. M.

The right of workingmen to group themselves into organization for their protection and full enjoyment of life is an old problem. During feudal system of the middle age, workers received food, clothing, and shelter as compensation for services rendered to land owners or manorial lords.

With the abolition of the feudal system, however, the laboring classes felt the necessity for some form of representation to protect them from being victimized by scrupulous bosses. Guilds came into existence. These guilds, the so-called forerunner of organized labor, were formed to guarantee craftsmen reasonable prices for their products, also to prevent unfair competition between producers, and to stipulate the quality of goods to be manufactured.

Workingmen, therefore, combined to promote their general welfare. Trade unions — unions in which men of the same profession came together — were formed. The growth of these organizations since their inception in the 19th century has been tremendous, and no one can doubt the concerted power wielded by trade unions all over the world, particularly in England and the United States.

The method most used by unions to achieve their demands is collective bargaining. A single employee asking his employer for a salary increase could not expect to receive as much consideration as would a similar request coming from all his fellow workmen united in a solid body. As President Theodore Roosevelt, in reference to a mine dispute, said: "Individually the miners were

group or groups.

If you feel it is high time the vicious un-American practice of maintaining "gold and silver" discrimination be ended; if you feel you are entitled to a decent, living, wage (whether you are a man or a woman), then add your voice to the thousands of others in the ranks of the CANAL ZONE WORKERS UNION and support the rally at the National Gymnasium on July 4th. We extend a hearty invitation to all WORKERS, STUDENTS, and friends of labor... Bring your friends, bring your relations, and even bring your mother-in-law. TOGETHER WE CAN WIN, Let 9:30 A.M. July 4th, mark the hour when the "Liberty Bell" proclaims the independence of the organized Canal Zone Worker.

Due to the present paper shortage, we are unable to publish a larger paper but sincerely hope to be able to present to you, with our next issue, and eight paged paper filled with all the news you want.

impotent to enter a wage contract with the great companies; they could make fair terms only by uniting into trade unions to bargain collectively." If collective bargaining fails, the unions call a general strike by the workers. Inasmuch as strikes cause great losses to the workers and society alike, unions use this method to obtain their demands only as a last resort.

With the exception of totalitarian countries in which the people are denied freedom of expression, labor organizations are fully recognized by governments. A "national trade union" according to the federal government of the United States is "any association of working people having two or more branches in the States or Territories of the United States for the purpose of aiding its members to become more skillful and efficient workers, the promotion of their general intelligence, the elevation of their character, the regulation of their wages and their hours and conditions of labor, the protection of their individual rights in the prosecution of their trade or trades, the raising of funds for the benefit of sick, disabled, or unemployed members, or the families of deceased members, or for such other object or objects for which working people may lawfully combine, having in view their mutual protection or benefit." Legislation in some of the states constitutions prohibits the discharge of employees because of their union affiliations. It is readily seen, therefore, that organized labor is not only recognized by democratic governments, but that it is also supported wholeheartedly by them.

In the Canal Zone, labor besides its three divisions of skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled has been classified as "gold" and "silver." Gold refers to Americans, silver to non-Americans. Skilled positions are filled by "gold" employees who are represented by the Metal Trades Council, an affiliate of the American Federation of Labor. On the other hand, semi-skilled and unskilled labor is performed by "silver" employees, the majority of workingmen in Canal Zone. In the past many attempts were made to organize these so-called silver workers for their "Mutual protection and benefit." All these efforts were unsuccessful, and these workers, regardless of their abilities and capabilities, have been victims of exploitation.

Today, the truth of the axiom "united we stand, divided we fall" has been brought home, if not to all, to the majority of the Canal Zone so-called "silver" worker. These workers are now aware of the fact that individually they have no chances; that unorganized labor has no bargaining power that it is only through organized labor will they be able to enjoy the benefits of an abundant life.

Yes, these exploited laborers are now ready to combat the practices of discrimination and un-Americanism in the Canal Zone. They know now that as employees of the federal government of the United States, the right to bargain collectively for better wages, shorter working hours, better living conditions, better old-age pension, etc., can only be attained through organized labor.

METAL TRADES...?

(From Page 1)

In openly declaring war on the U.P.W.A. our affiliate, we accept this challenge. We understand also why President Jimenez cabled Washington and stated bluntly that "the trade unions on the Zone prevented any settlement of differences between Americans and Latin Americans in the interests of the Good Neighbour Policy. He directly referred to the M. T.C. which is the prime factor in upholding the most embarrassing system of discrimination in the entire world. Like a prostitute who protests to much concerning her virtue, the Metal Trades Council insists every week in their newspaper that they will never "embarrass the

American Govt." while in underhand, sneak-thief fashion they continue to sabotage all efforts to bring about a true Good Neighbour Policy fostered by the American Government, President Jimenez and Ambassador Hines. It is they only who embarrass the American Government and make it a blot for the entire civilized world to look upon with loathing at the vilest of all discriminatory practices the Gold and Silver Roll.

We accept challenge of War in the complete interests of the American and Panamanian Government to halt their embarrassing tactics and dedicate our Union the Complete Abolition of the Gold and Silver Rolls.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

- 1.—Canal Zone Workers Union.
- 2.—Panama Federation of Workers.
- 3.—Congress of Industrial Organizations.
- 4.—United Public Workers of American (Our Union).
- 5.—World Federation of Trade Unions.
- 6.—National Maritime Union (Seamen's Branch of the C. I.O.)
- 7.—United Auto Workers (The C.I.O. branch of automobile workers)
- 8.—Confederation of Latin America Workers.
- 9.—Luis Avila.
- 10.—Phillip Murray.
- 11.—Abram Flaxer.
- 12.—Vincent Lombardo Toledano.
- 13.—The C.I.O. and the C.T.A.L.

EDITORIAL

A new era has begun with in the Canal Zone which eventually will affect the Republic of Panama. It is the era of organized labor.

Although the labor movement is not a new story in the Republic, it is very encouraging to see its rapid growth on the Zone in the form of the Canal Zone Workers Union on the Pacific side, and the Canal Zone Labor Union on the Atlantic Side. There's a new day coming, not "manana" but TODAY. The Union membership felt the need for a newspaper that could effectively present their program to the public, so it is for this reason that the "Action" is being published. We shall endeavor to bring to members and non members as well, the orientation necessary in the fight for higher wages and decent working conditions.

We are united for the expressed purpose of replacing the Hitlerian condition that now exist on the Canal Zone, with the kind of democracy to which the late Franklin D. Roosevelt dedicated his life; the kind of democracy where men are treated like human beings regardless of the color of their skins. History proves that this can best be achieved by the united actions of all workers, within the ranks of organized labor.

The over-all rise in the cost of living that went into effect July 1, 1946, constitutes a CUT IN PAY. With prices rising steadily, our miserable sub-standard wages, are worth less and less. Is all this to be met sitting down? We say "NO!"

When the workers in the U. S. were faced with this very problem, they fought, through the C.I.O., for wage increases to enable them to meet skyrocketing prices. It is they, the C.I.O., who fought for and won the very 14% increase now being granted the "gold roll." We refuse to be the "forgotten man" and accept odd penny raises at the "desecration of supervisors," as has been the practice in the past. Long and bitter experience has taught us that the only thing resulting from a one-man fight is the loss of a job, nothing more. It is high time we stopped trying to fight alone and learn to get together for some fruitful organized action.

This union, as well as its newspaper, has no political affiliations, nor do we intend to offer our services to any politician or to any political

Why you must Join the C.Z.W.U.

The Canal Zone Workers Union, is the only hope of Canal Zone employees, of the so called alien group, for improving their economic conditions.

Every Canal worker realizes that it is necessary to do something to remedy the situation. Every employee knows that we must present a United Front, to achieve the economic betterment to which we aspire. Very well, the answer is, a strong well organized Union. It is a common knowledge that, in Unity there is Strength.

Now, here are some pertinent facts on the subject. The U. S. government, with one eye on a rapid and elastic defense of her coasts, and the other on a world wide acceleration of commerce, from which she could derive vast economic benefits, accomplished that great engineering feat, The Panama Canal. It was accomplished at the cost of millions of dollars, at the cost of hundreds of human lives. Those who sacrificed their lives and blood, were in the great majority West Indian Workers. It

matters not that they were West Indians, the important thing is that, they were from the poor working class.

Now, this is the outstanding point, The money invested in the Canal, has paid remarkable dividends to the United States, and to the American employees, considered as the Gold Roll. On the contrary, the flesh and blood sacrifices, made by the poor workers, who contributed so much, has not, to date, produced any lucrative dividends to the so-called Silver Roll. Unfortunately, it has resulted in racial discrimination, oppression and misery, for this class.

Will the working class remain in this uncertain and alarming conditions?

The answer is—NO!
This is the reason for the Canal Zone Workers Union. This is why YOU must join this Union, to do everything within your power to make it strong.

CANAL WORKERS, you MUST enroll now in the Canal Zone Workers Union. It is your only hope.

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