

A WARNING TO THE . . .

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and the Central Labor Union and bears the signatures of both its presidents.

Such actions inescapably lead one to the conclusion that these are labor organizations in name only. They know not the simplest meanings of the principals of "brotherhood" "solidarity," and "humanitarianism" which have been the keystones of the labor movement throughout its history.

The members of our union have never consciously committed an act to harm another worker or body of workers, including the A. F. of L. despite unprecedented provocation. That would be contrary to our understanding of unionism. We are concerned with furthering our own economic welfare. If, in the process of gaining better living standards for ourselves, we help someone else—so much the better.

We believe that, if we were to inflict harm upon another group of workers, it would inevitably come back to hurt us because the welfare of all workers is inextricably connected and interdependent.

We have always tried to foster harmony between the two groups of employees on the Canal Zone because we think we have an obligation to the Panama Canal and other U.S. Government agencies to work for more efficient operation. Harmony will heighten efficiency; discord will have the opposite effect.

However, in the face of this wanton and unprovoked attack by the A. F. of L. we cannot remain silent. We hope that the answer printed here is clear enough for all to see. And we solemnly warn our would-be tormentors that we can be pressed only so far.

ANOTHER EDITORIAL

Reduction in Force Policy should be revamped

The principle of recognition of seniority in conditions of employment is a time-honored and prevalent practice in American industry. There is hardly a union contract negotiated that does not give some substantial weight to seniority for promotion and reduction-in-force purposes.

This established right of the vast majority of working people is as deeply imbedded in the labor movement as is the 40-hour week, overtime rates, injury compensation, and other hard fought for privileges.

Federal employees for years suffered from arbitrary and discriminatory treatment during lay-offs because of the obsolete and inequitable system in effect in the government. Finally, after years of struggle, union campaigns, spearheaded by UPW, won an improved reduction-in-force system for federal employees. The Civil Service Commission had finally been convinced that the principle of seniority, as applied almost universally in industry, should have at least some weight in government procedures.

Many state, county, and municipal governments followed suit and today the overwhelming number of employees—whether, in industry or government—have some seniority protection in lay-off and promotion procedures.

The reason for placing emphasis on seniority is simple enough. Efficiency is a very difficult thing to determine with any measure of precision. Different supervisors called upon to rate the efficiency of the same employees will arrive at widely varying answers. No objective method for accurately rating efficiency has yet been developed despite all the fancy formulas and prescriptions that personnel experts have elaborately drawn up.

We daresay that there are few supervisors indeed who will not, permit—consciously or unconsciously—personal factors, wholly apart from efficiency, to influence their judgment of an employee's worth. An employee might be the fastest, ablest, and most reliable in a group of fifty, yet the one who polishes the boss's car may yet the preference.

Some bosses may prefer submissive, compliant workers and give a reduction-in-force notice to an independent-minded employee even though he was the more competent. How many bootlickers have retained their jobs long after other and more efficient employees have been dismissed?

An argument between an employee and his supervisor may rankle in the boss's mind for years and provide the basis for a lay-off notice.

These arguments do not constitute a particular indictment of the Canal Zone force of supervisors and foremen. Unions have discovered that these conditions prevail wherever workers are bossed or supervised. The fact is, simply, that the average foreman cannot be relied upon to determine the relative efficiency of his employees on an accurate, impartial or equitable basis.

Although the "gold" employees, as well as the thousands of non-citizen employees of the Army, Navy and Air Forces, have some seniority protection in their lay-off procedure, as prescribed by the Civil Service Commission, the "silver" employees of the

AS 3000 MARCHERS BRAVED 100° HEAT



Pacific side paraders as they neared the La Boca Ball Park after having traversed the principal streets of Balboa and Ancon in a great show of solidarity to Local 713.

Union Hits Canal Policies In Meeting With Vietheer

A union delegation consisting of Foster Bournes, International Representative, and Herman Moore, Organizer, held a lengthy conference with George Vietheer, last month to pound home Local 713's program on several important points.

George Vietheer has spent the last month on the Isthmus studying pay scales and working conditions of the U.S. citizen and non-citizen employees. He is the deputy Personnel Director of the Commerce Department and was sent here on special assignment by the Department of Defense which has jurisdiction over personnel practices on the Canal Zone.

The delegation made a vigorous attack against the application of the "Caribbean Wage Scale" to the non-citizen employees of the Canal Zone. Opposition was also registered against several undesirable Panama Canal personnel policies.

The outmoded reduction-in-force system was singled out for denunciation. "The application of one standard to the 'gold' employees and another standard to the 'silver' employees caused bitterness and resentment among thousands of workers," the delegation stated.

The efficiency rating system, promotion system, housing situation, and other targets of the union's program were also stressed by the two-man delegation.

Mr. Vietheer said he was very interested in the comments of Bournes and Moore and would certainly give them serious consideration in compiling the report on his survey.

Canal-Railroad are still working under an obsolete "efficiency" procedure.

This policy gives the average foreman such wide latitude that he can rid himself of any employee he finds personally objectionable, irrespective of his efficiency, at the first lay-off opportunity. In addition we find workers who have toiled faithfully for the Panama Canal for as much as 20 or 25 years heartlessly cast aside because they can no longer wield a pick as fast as a 25-year old man.

Some of these employees are not even eligible for Disability Relief. No one will hire them because they are so advanced in age. After their long years of work, they walk away with a pink slip in their hands to become an economic derelict hunting for charity.

A decent reduction-in-force procedure would have given some protection to these employees. We maintain that, even if a man who has worked for 25 years can't lift as heavy a load as a youngster, the Panama Canal owes him a debt for his long and faithful years of service. To cast him out penniless and destitute hardly sounds like justice.

We wonder whether the efficiency demands of the United States government are so exacting that they compel actions like these. President Truman once said that the United States government should be a model employer. This high-sounding statement rings like hollow mockery in our ears in the face of the outmoded lay-off policy.

We have been out in the cold too long. We want to enjoy some of the simple rights of other federal employees and other working people. As a step in this direction we think it high time that the Administration make some basic changes in its reduction-in-force policy so that favoritism, discrimination, and arbitrariness can be tossed out of the window in favor of security, protection, and justice.

Uncle Dudley Says:

After reading several letters in a certain weekly newspaper praising its writers and their policies, I am reminded of a song that was very popular some years ago. Maybe you recalled it too — "I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter".

Although the AFGE has gone along with President Truman's "Loyalty Order" campaign, the President of an A. F. of L. local in Detroit, a federal employee, was suspended from his job for "disloyalty". UPW, believing in principles, is fighting for his reinstatement.

We hear, because of recent unfavorable accusations, that a certain weekly newspaper is promising to redeem stocks held by shareholders at face value. Here's your chance stockholders. Dig up all those dusty shares lying in the trunks.

THOUSANDS JOIN...

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paraders served to emblazon the justifiable demands of the Union. An adequate retirement system and not disability relief; better housing; better wages and better schools, were some of the principal demands of the Union. Other posters told of the memory still cherished by the Local for its former Regional Director Max Brodsky, who was illegally expelled by Ex-Foreign Minister Molino.

The parade on the Atlantic side, held in the afternoon under much cooler weather, was an outstanding success. An approximate 5000 persons were on hand to join the parade.

Thousands of onlookers poured into the streets and jammed the balconies of buildings to view the greatest Labor Day parade ever staged in this country. The large crowd was reminiscent, in number, of the carnival celebrations held annually in Colon.

The Colon Bombero Band and the Concordia Band supplied the martial music for the marchers whose route included the principal Cristobal area and the main streets of Colon.

The paraders climaxed their trek with a Labor Day Rally at the Arena Colon where well-known figures, including National Deputy Jorge Illueca, Colon Mayor Dominador Bazan, Mr. Hector Connor, and Mr. Mario Julio, delivered addresses that were well received by the members. Bro. McKinnon, the blind ex-Panama Canal and Army employee, expressed his gratitude for the splendid representation by the Union that enabled him to receive more than \$2000 back payments and a decent monthly retirement for life.

To the enemies of the Union who watched furtively from the sidelines briefly hidden by trees and shrubbery, the parades were overwhelming demonstration of the solidarity of Local 713 members and their support for UPW.