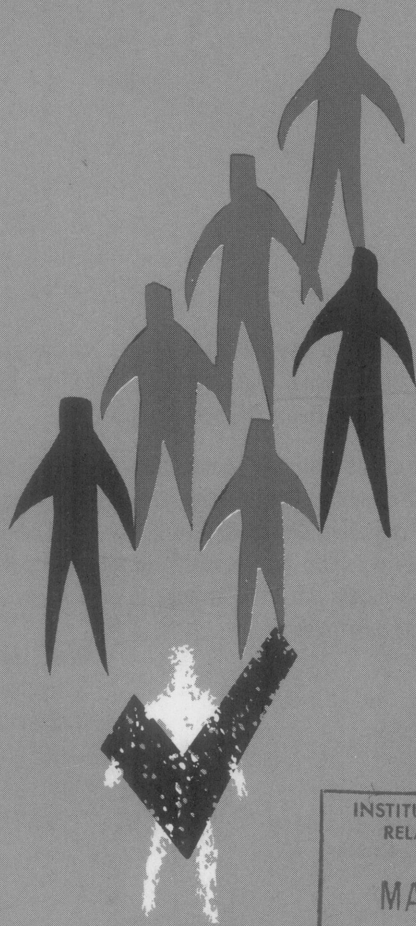


Labor monopoly (1961)

CHECK-OFF



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labor bosses and working men...

"It may well be that if compulsory union membership is abolished, union members and non-union members will be able to hold in check the tremendous power now exercised over the nation by their bosses."

Jameson G. Campaigne author of American Might and Soviet Myth

Washington, National right to work committee,
1961

Permission for reprinting two key chapters of the widely-heralded book, **CHECK-OFF**, has been granted to the National Right To Work Committee by its author, Jameson G. Campaigne, and its publisher, Henry Regnery Company.

It is the expectation of the National Committee that distribution of this excerpt of Mr. Campaigne's book will stimulate wide reading and distribution of the book in its entirety. The Committee staff considers **CHECK-OFF** to be the most important exploration of the dangers of compulsory unionism now available to the American people. It urges that all readers of this excerpt obtain the book, arrange to have it placed in school libraries, and recommend it to friends and neighbors.

Reed Larson
Executive Vice President
National Right To Work Committee

CHECK-OFF

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COPE

"Such is the Forgotten Man . . . He keeps production going on. He contributes to the strength of the parties. He is flattered before election. He is strongly patriotic. . . . Consequently, he is forgotten."

WILLIAM GRAHAM SUMNER, *The Forgotten Man*

THE POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE of the CIO was founded by Sidney Hillman in 1943. This was not long after he had taken under his wing in Washington young Walter Reuther, then merely the head of the General Motors Division of the UAW. Three years later in 1947, the AFL also formed a political arm, the League of Political Education, which began to print and distribute material supporting local and federal candidates for public office, and to raise funds by soliciting contributions. The merger in 1955 of the CIO with the AFL reached out in one direction to "organize the unorganized" in a drive to impose the union shop and checkoff on such holdouts as Kohler. At the same time it embarked on a major effort in political action.

These combined attacks were to be the sort of pincer movement familiar to military strategists. One prong of this offensive was economic, the other was political. Between them labor's

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leadership squeezed all other political and economic powers into an ever narrower compass. There was no other group in the United States which could match either the prepaid campaign power available when labor organizers were assigned to organize precincts, or the financial resources which the leaders could draw upon from the dues constantly refilling their treasuries. The Taft-Hartley Act in 1947 had forbidden labor leaders to make from union funds "any contribution or expenditure in connection with" election to any federal office. Labor leaders, however, just ignored the law. They put unionism's political activity under their favorite heading of "education," and the courts have so far upheld their interpretation.

When the AFL and the CIO, just before their actual unification in 1955, joined their separate political arms, they called the political consolidation COPE, the Committee on Political Education. At the top of COPE was the AFL-CIO National Committee, composed of members of the AFL-CIO Executive Board, plus its international officers. To any reader of this book, it will now be evident that Walter Reuther would dominate such a group. When he could not dominate by power alone, he would do so by his superior energy, highly-paid staff research, and personal force of character.

George Meany was the only man who could rival him. But national political action was not Meany's main interest. As head of the AFL Meany came into the AFL-CIO consolidation with the objective of providing one unified house for labor. It was Reuther, as leader of the more traditionally political CIO, who looked beyond to see unity not as an end in itself but as a political instrument. So he provided COPE with the superb organization and effectiveness he had already made unbeatable in the UAW.

Under the COPE National Committee were placed regional organizations to carry out its decisions across the nation. Every state was given a COPE division, with committees in each

county and city to send out instructions down to the last union local.

There are seventy thousand AFL-CIO locals, and each is instructed by COPE how to set up techniques for political penetration. Available to such committees from COPE's technical staffs are the voting records of local candidates and national candidates for election or re-election. Such candidates are given scores from 1 to 100, depending on how they have voted. A candidate may have a perfect score; Senator Jack Kennedy scored 100 in 1960. Another candidate may score only half that, or even less, as did Senator Lyndon Johnson, whose record was 52, the same as that of many Republicans. A constant series of pamphlets goes out from the central directorate to the approximately forty thousand committees and local organizations. Instructions are in pamphlet form with catchy titles: *How to Be A Wednesday Morning Quarterback*, *Tips for Block Workers*, and so on down a long list of astute grass-root political methods, which cover everything from conducting a one-man telephone campaign to making a house-to-house, block-by-block canvass involving hundreds of organizers. These organizers are, of course, already paid by the union locals for which they work. Their expenses in campaigning are viewed with a liberal eye and include reimbursement for use of their cars.

One of the most popular devices (and one which seems to me particularly significant) is the "home visit." Any worker who is one of the millions of AFL-CIO members, or one who is not, may open his door in the evening or on a Saturday to find a pair of smiling organizers on his doorstep. They will inquire if he and members of his family of voting age are registered. Has he information about all the candidates? The degree of care which is taken to maintain an appearance of impartiality as the organizers give out their educational material will vary with the locality and the hold which unionism's leadership has on the voter as an individual. If he is a checked-off man in the

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fullest sense of the word, very little impartiality may be shown. Even outright coercion may be used to get a man registered. At Sheboygan, for example, during the Kohler strike, the voting registration of strikers was checked by the local as the men entered the hall to pick up their food vouchers and assistance checks. The union paper even carried photographs of the desks in the union hall, and of the posters saying, "You don't count until you register." Below the photographs appeared several columns of newsprint with adverse remarks about the Republicans and favorable comment on the Democrats.

Some locals stamp the dues books of members: "Registered Voter." Anyone without a stamp is indicating that he has not responded to the educational efforts of the leaders, so he is subject to all the fears of a man whose compulsory union membership puts his job at the mercy of the union. Sometimes a local will send a letter to its members instructing each man to have the official clerk who registers him sign a card to be mailed to union headquarters. The man will be told that he is expected to get the signed card off promptly. If he is not heard from by a certain date his name will be placed on a list of those who are on record for non-cooperation.

"Registration" is supposed to be just what the word says: registration to vote, and supposedly either party will do. Actually, however, the sole admissible party is, in nearly all cases, the Democrats.* Of course the AFL-CIO Constitutional Congress, when the consolidation of the CIO and AFL was achieved, passed a resolution saying, "We reaffirm labor's traditional

* Clarence Bridgeman, a mine worker in Michigan, is a case in point. He became a candidate for county clerk on the Republican ticket, and was told by the local union leadership "in clear language that I was running on the wrong ticket. This happened on at least two occasions."¹ Inside unionism today where as Walter Reuther says, "ninety per cent of the leadership of the American labor movement now accepts the basic concept to the relationship of wages, prices and profits that we advanced in 1945,"² it is a sort of high treason for a union member to belong to the party which still advocates a free market as best for the prosperity of a free people.

policy of avoiding entangling alliances with any other group and of supporting worthy candidates, regardless of party affiliation." So when union organizers are making a "visit at home" to a union member on whom their grip is for some reason not quite certain, or if they are visiting someone who does not belong to the union, they may make a really vivid display of impartiality, praising the merits of both candidates. They may have just come from a call next door where the union member got the impression that he had to register as a Democrat or else. But his non-union neighbor will be led to believe that the organizers are simply fine American citizens anxious to have everyone exercise his voting privilege in a free country. Immigrants, in particular, are apt to be impressed by this evidence of dedicated democracy at work. Perhaps they will notice later that the literature left behind always seems to lead to a natural conclusion that the Democrat is the best man. But this literature has been put together by headquarters staffers who earn their salaries by being psychologically expert at anticipating public reaction. Generally the literature left behind by COPE's callers for an uncommitted householder is such a masterpiece of persuasive propaganda that it will not antagonize him anyhow.

There are hundreds of paid staff personnel at COPE headquarters and countless members of COPE part-time and full-time workers. Every organizer and business agent and every union official in the thirteen million member AFL-CIO has the duty of working for COPE. COPE is an organization whose power over our national government, through its power over the electorate, has never before been equalled in a free country.

The power structure of COPE is the same as that laid down in Reuther's "plans." All decisions are in the hands of what he always liked to term an "over-all" agency. In COPE's case this is the National Committee, of which he himself is the dominant member. Below are the state and regional organs which implement the central policy. All lines of power press down

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from the National Committee upon the local committees, and down again from the local committees upon the membership.

Political vote-getting seems a strange role for a union organizer—traditionally the idealistic militant of the barricades. But as Murray Kempton has written, "It is a long time since he marched in a united army for endless frontiers. The army's advance has ceased; it is bivouacked in lonely towns with no immediate prospect that it will lift its banner and march again. It is time to think of pensions. The complaints of one's wife drown out the fading rumble of the distant drum. The liberation of the toilers is no longer a consuming dream; like all other dreams, it has been reduced simply to a career." Indeed, what else can it be? As Kempton says, the "typical field organizer has put years in the job and is unfit for anything else except possibly employer labor relations, which is a shameful fate."³

Old-timers of this sort, reinforced by the thousands of young men who are recruited from high schools and colleges every year into professional political unionism, swarm out at election time from the central hive, which is COPE. For them to hope for idealism or personal significance in an organization of its size and kind is impossible. The cynicism and soul-selling of the "organization men," analyzed by William H. Whyte in his book by that title, is a minor phenomenon compared to the state of mind which dominates these people. They are faceless men, without identity and without power. They have no hope but to advance little by little up the endless ladders of union careerism, where the top positions seem always to be occupied by people too entrenched to be dislodged. Once, in 1957 and 1958, there was a movement among certain union organizers to "organize and bargain collectively" on their own behalf. They tried to form a union. This group of people inside an organization whose own enormous national power was based on the right to "organize and bargain collectively," was trying to obtain from the entrenched leadership the same right for them-

selves. In the Executive Council, Walter Reuther is said to have spoken for half an hour against recognition.⁴ The explanation was that union organizers are "managerial employees" and their duties cannot be discussed on the same level as factory or office jobs. The ladder of promotion inside the machine was supposed to be sufficiently rewarding to its workers without any outside guarantees.

After years of constantly smoother organization, and more intensive consolidation at the top, the number of good jobs in career unionism has shrunk. Organizational efficiency lets the chiefs constantly take more power into their own hands. The powers of the men-in-the-middle diminish correspondingly. An illustration is the staff of the UAW today. A staff job used to bring in an income which exceeded that of an auto worker in the shop by about one hundred and fifty per cent. An auto worker earned about \$100 a week, while a staff member got \$153, with additions of \$35 in tax-free expense money, about \$100 for an automobile, around \$15 a week to a fund for ultimate severance pay, and certain insurance and medical prerequisites, which in all could amount to an income of about \$12,500 each year. But in 1959, salaries were cut five per cent and the staff was pared from 750 to 580 persons.⁵ Thus the space separating the rulers from the ruled has steadily increased. There is a larger and emptier power gap between leaders and led. It should be remembered, too, that status inside unions has always been based not on the amount of money a man is making but on the power he has. The increase in the power gap between leaders and led is, therefore, greater than mere figures can show.

*

The power of the union leaders over such an organization as COPE is complete. Some question COPE's ability to control its political candidates after their election. But a candidate elected

COPE

with the help of COPE is playing a dangerous game if he opposes the wishes of his backers. Usually he understands his position in advance. If he is a lesser office-holder he may even be asked to sign a pledge that he will support the platform endorsed by the union, or that he will clear all campaign literature with a COPE committee. Usually, however, such measures are not necessary. A candidate who gets COPE's support knows that if he fails to please labor's leadership he will be punished by being put out of office.

Take the case of Representative Don Hayworth of Michigan, who lost his seat in Congress in 1956. Michigan, the home state of Reuther's UAW, was seized by Reuther's UAW political machine long before COPE came into existence. As early as 1947 Reuther worked out a program with one of his lieutenants, August Scholle, President of the Michigan CIO Council. This program embraced most of the techniques since developed by COPE, except that they were more visible and open violence played a part. For instance, delegates to Democratic district conventions, whose electoral petitions were believed by Reuther's PAC members to contain forged signatures were ejected by force when they tried to enter convention meetings. The persons who did the ejecting were called bouncers, and one bouncer from Wayne County's District Fifteen told Fay Calkins, who was then preparing her book on the CIO and the Democratic Party, that "he was equipped with six men, twenty clubs, and two pistols but was not called upon to use them."⁶ According to one description in the press, the Fourteenth District Chairman "presided with a baseball bat."⁷

In any case, the PAC, while it was not as sophisticated as COPE became later, did take over a weak Democratic Party in Michigan. It did turn it into a strong machine by getting voters indoctrinated and registered. It did capture this once Republican state for the Democrats. Governor G. Mennen Williams became so careful never to make any move that might offend Wal-

ter Reuther that when John Gunaca beat up the father of a Kohler striker and was said to have helped cause the old man's death, Governor Williams refused to have him extradited from Michigan to stand trial.*

It was against this background that Representative Hayworth made his mistake in 1956. Hayworth had conducted a poll of farmers in his district. The results favored President Eisenhower's flexible price support program rather than the Democratic program of high rigid supports. Reuther, of course, has had strong convictions about farmers ever since the war, particularly about the need for them to be more centrally controlled. Possibly Hayworth was unaware of Reuther's convictions. Possibly he merely wanted honestly to represent his farm constituents' point of view. Whatever the reason, he voted the wrong way by supporting President Eisenhower's policy. When he learned the CIO reaction, he took another farm poll which conveniently found the farmers making the opposite decision in favor of rigid supports.⁸ But that didn't help him. He lost his seat in Congress anyhow. He was replaced by another man whom unionism's leadership apparently deemed sounder in his thinking. But COPE doesn't just limit itself to the classic system of reward and punishment, according to Samuel Gomper's old dictum that labor "rewards its friends and punishes its enemies." COPE also dictates who shall be and who shall not be in office. It may decide to use an office such as United States Congressman for the purposes of its own internal politics. For example, one of Reuther's paper opponents was Carl Stellato, President of Ford Local 600, whose nomination for president of the UAW at the 1957 International Convention was a gesture toward democratic process. Anti-Reutherites clustered behind Stellato, and Stellato, of course, quickly withdrew, leaving Reuther to be re-

* Said Gunaca to his guard on his way to a preliminary hearing on his extradition, "Sarge, this will never do you any good. Mazey will never leave Soapy send me back to Wisconsin."⁹

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elected by acclamation.¹⁰ In 1958, Stellato turned up as candidate for the seat of young Michigan Congressman Lesinski, who for several years had served in Congress with a record of continuous support for the labor forces which elected him. Before Stellato challenged him for his office, a UAW survey of Lesinski's record in Congress showed that he had voted "right"* on nineteen out of twenty test issues.¹¹

When Lesinski asked Reuther for the usual labor endorsement he received a summons from Stellato's Ford Local 600 to appear at a meeting. For seven years Lesinski had had a nearly perfect record with no previous complaint. So one must sympathize with Stellato's men who had the job of asking him hostile questions. According to the press, the questions generally boiled down to things like: "Why didn't you appoint some of us guys to your office staff?"¹² The meeting voted against Lesinski 94 to 6, and Stellato not only opposed him in the Democratic primary, but after he lost it by some six thousand votes, opposed him again two years later. The union move against Lesinski was defeated by the voters, because the moves were so brazen that their cynicism was plain. So the men and women of labor repudiated it. They understood what was being tried against their young congressman and they used the secret ballot to defeat their leader. The Stellato-Lesinski contest, therefore, may show a significant possibility. However, this was one of the rare cases when the public and the rank and file were able to see what was going on. They are seldom so fortunate.

COPE has been enormously successful in its invasion of the Democratic Party. With COPE, Reuther has advanced much farther toward controlling the United States government than would have been possible if labor had developed its own third party. At COPE's Washington headquarters there is a central card file of all 13.5 million AFL-CIO members, with voting registration noted, as well as area, local union, and place of

* For this system of ratings see picture folder, page 13.

employment. In Washington, too, hundreds of labor officials from all over the country keep track of COPE's senators and COPE's congressmen, plus aspiring senators and congressmen, and all the people in the swarming Washington agencies who do not wish to offend COPE and may some day need its help. Unions are required now publicly to report their political expenditures, but the reported expenditures mean nothing, since the salaries of organizers and the others who actually form the machine are not included. As the political arm of the AFL-CIO, COPE has more than four hundred local units. The combined union membership is spread out through the entire electorate. Other giant unions have followed COPE in establishing similar political arms. A summary of these groups is in Appendix B at the back of the book.

The Reuther brothers act as a team at the top of the political machinery of COPE. Roy became co-director with Walter of the UAW's Citizenship Department handling internal political indoctrination. Victor is a roving international observer, in touch with labor attaches at the various United States embassies throughout the world.

Immense sums are available to the union elite for political purposes. In 1958, the thirty-two union groups outspent the Democratic Party, and this was just in reported expenditures. Only what is spent for direct political contributions in federal elections must be reported. Neither unions nor corporations may use money from their treasuries for such purposes. But they may, in some states, draw upon their treasuries to back local and state candidates. And, of course, they can spend dues money for "education."

The programs put forward by COPE are usually followed by labor's other political agencies, in spite of the rivalry among the leaders of the giant unions. One of the chief aims is to uphold compulsory unionism. In one state alone, two million dollars is estimated to have been spent to fight passage of a right-to-work

COPE

law. Compulsory unionism is the keystone of the power of labor's leaders. Their kingdoms would shrink drastically without it. Other targets are limitation of corporate profits and extension of government enterprises such as TVA—a drive supplemented by working for limitation of private initiative. Offshore oil wells, for example, must be developed by the central government, not by private oil companies. This drive is being made in the exact direction of all the goals which Reuther's "plans" put forward.

Walter Reuther's personal power has grown so great that he probably realizes that if it was understood, it would shock and alarm the public. So now, where he once welcomed publicity, he shuns it. He was in Los Angeles during the Democratic Convention which nominated President Kennedy. George Meany was also present and they brought with them the National Director of COPE and his deputy, plus a chief public relations director, chief lobbyist, and chief economist. No press conference was held. Neither Reuther nor Meany appeared conspicuously anywhere. No member of the group was ever caught in action by the sharp eye of television. They stayed in their hotel suites and worked from there through political office holders under their control and delegates to the convention who were CIO-AFL officers or organizers.

From the beginning an obstacle to complete domination of the Democratic Party has been the Senate. In 1958, for example, 25 Senatorial candidates backed by COPE won. Only 7 lost. Of 294 House candidates supported by COPE, 183 were elected. COPE felt with reason that it was responsible for the huge Democratic majority in Congress in 1958. But Congress did not pay off with the legislation union leaders wanted. Instead it passed the Landrum Griffin bill, which labor bosses opposed even after it had been emasculated. They claimed, as Reuther did, that unionism's rank and file must clean its own house without interference. The reason Congress was able to resist the will

of labor's leaders was that in both House and Senate—but particularly in the Senate—the Republicans under the Eisenhower administration were able to combine effectively with conservative Democrats. Thus they were able to outvote the men from COPE.

The Reuthers were determined that this would not happen under the Kennedy administration. The 1960 Convention was the scene of vigorous maneuvers against the Southern conservatives. For example, the strong civil rights plank which went into the Democratic Party platform in Los Angeles was attributed to pressure for human rights by the liberal leaders of labor. But the plank actually served another purpose, less visible but more important. This was to drive the Southern conservatives into a near walkout. A Reuther aide, quoted by Roscoe Born, labor reporter during the convention for the *Wall Street Journal*, said "We're not trying to provoke the South into bolting but we're not willing to compromise to keep them in the party either. We can win without them."

A union president stated further, "There's no question about it—political realignment is the big pitch. I don't know that all of us have reasoned it out as far ahead as Walter has but we're going along with him."¹³

It seems clear that Reuther hoped the strong civil rights plank would make the Southerners angry enough to bolt. It almost did. So it is quite possible that Reuther felt that, in the strategy of putting first things first, his own aim of getting internal control of the Democratic Party was even more important than getting Kennedy elected.

Senator Kennedy naturally felt otherwise, and much of the damage was undone by his skillful choice of Lyndon Johnson as his running mate. After all, COPE at that point could scarcely avoid supporting Kennedy, and Reuther's anger not only could do him no immediate harm, but would calm down as soon as Kennedy began to pay off his political debts to Reuther after

COPE

the inauguration. Furthermore, the Reuthers would soon realize that to have Johnson relegated to the vice-presidency would take out of the Senate one of their most effective opponents.

As the Kennedy administration embarked on its first year, the Reuther influence was thrown behind every plan to increase the scope of government intervention into new phases of economic activity. The full weight of COPE's political power was exerted on congressmen and senators to push through massive new welfare programs in the field of public housing, increased social security benefits, Federal aid to education and the program of Secretary of Agriculture Freeman to impose tighter controls over American farming. The partial success of President Kennedy's domestic program in Congress must be largely attributed to the constant pressure of the COPE machine upon members of Congress.

The Reuthers exert their influence in the field of foreign affairs, as well. Of course Victor Reuther works through the labor attaches of the State Department behind the scenes and it is impossible to tell how powerful his influence is upon the lower echelons of our foreign service. Walter Reuther's first excursion into this field under the Kennedy administration came when he accepted Kennedy's suggestion to form the "Tractors for Castro" committee with Mrs. Roosevelt and Milton Eisenhower. Or perhaps this was Walter Reuther's own idea. Certainly he used the full publicity facilities of the UAW in pushing what appeared to many to be a violation of the Lagon Act which specifically bars private citizens from negotiating with foreign governments. His lieutenants in the UAW helped in the organization and direction of the effort to pay ransom to the Cuban dictator.

It seems quite clear that today the temper of the nation is conservative. The Reuther positions on both domestic and foreign affairs are clearly minority positions, yet with the backing of

COPE, Reuther and Kennedy have been able to push Congress into still greater social welfare and domestic spending programs. In 1960 a nationwide Gallup Poll showed that even though registered Democrats are in the majority, 51 per cent of the voters consider themselves conservatives—42 per cent in the East, 58 per cent in the Midwest, 55 per cent in the South, and 50 per cent in the Far West.¹⁴ Congress, however, was pushed in the opposite direction by the combined efforts of Kennedy and COPE.

Reuther with his tightly organized minority has been able to use his political influence to help the President push through much of the “liberal” domestic program that COPE had imposed upon the Democratic Party Platform. The President owes a great deal to the Reuthers, therefore. We can be sure that Walter Reuther will, like John L. Lewis, be demanding his quid pro quo from the Kennedy administration in the future. Just as he moved into greater and greater power within the union movement, so he now will seek greater and greater power over the councils of the government of the United States.

But there is one encouraging fact today which should not be overlooked. Walter Reuther is notably averse to letting other people use him as he uses them. The similarity in background and character between the Reuther brothers and the Kennedy brothers should be kept in mind. Although the two brother-teams can work together for common purposes, it is not in the nature of either team to let itself be dominated by the other. They may very well collide.

However, this probability, while encouraging, does not diminish the danger of the power that has been built up by the Reuthers. For the danger lies in the *character* of this power. It has become a force which while it talks of democracy, destroys democracy—while it praises human rights, denies human rights—while it speaks of education, turns education into propaganda—and while it claims to protect the individual, crushes indivi-

COPE

duals. As the often quoted Lord Acton said, "Power tends to corrupt: absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely."

Standing virtually outside the law, imposing their will on millions by coercion and propaganda, electing political candidates and influencing national policies, labor's baronies are the "monopoly trusts" of the twentieth century.

Where are the "trust busters?"

NOTES

1. *Congressional Record*, January 23, 1955
2. Walter Reuther, July 21, 1958
3. John C. Cort, "Labor's Glass House," *Commonweal*, April 4, 1958
4. See John C. Cort, "Labor's Glass House," *Commonweal*, April 1958
5. See Sidney Lens, *Crises of American Labor*, Sagamore Press, New York 1959, p. 169
6. Fay Calkins, *The CIO and the Democratic Party*, University of Chicago Press, 1952, p. 121
7. *Ibid.*, p. 122
8. *Detroit Times*, January 29, 1956
9. *Hearings*, *op. cit.*, p. 10123, R. 327
10. See Dayton, *op. cit.*, p. 251
11. See *Detroit News*, May 28, 1958
12. See *Detroit News*, May 25, 1958
13. *Wall Street Journal*, July 29, 1960
14. *Time*, August 1, 1960

TO SET MEN FREE

"What the Forgotten Man needs therefore, is that we come to a clearer understanding of liberty and to a more complete realization of it. Every step which we win in liberty will set the Forgotten Man free from some of his burdens and allow him to use his powers for himself and for the commonwealth."

WILLIAM GRAHAM SUMNER, *The Forgotten Man*

THE PRECEDING CHAPTERS all revolve around one single issue. This is the violation of human rights and personal dignity of the American worker and his struggle to preserve his individuality as a free man. The Kohler strike was instructive because here many workers who did join Reuther's union did so because they believed, mistakenly or not, that the company was violating their rights as individuals. Yet when the union won power it sought to do to the workers the very thing they had joined the union to oppose—deny them their rights to work and vote and even live in freedom. Where once the representatives of the monopoly industrial trusts said, "The public be damned" now Hoffa on the one hand and Reuther on the other say, "The worker be damned."

How then are we to free the Forgotten Man who has been

checked-off by his monopoly union? How can the labor union member be protected from exploitation by his employer on the one hand and the labor boss on the other? The answer lies in first giving him a choice as to how he himself would like his destiny to be decided.

This means, of course, the abolition of the compulsory check-off system, the legalization of the principle that every free worker has the right to join *or not to join* a union. I am amazed at the attitude of both individuals and organizations who believe that the union majority has the right to coerce the minority, not only as to whether or not a man can hold a job, but also as to whether or not he has the right to give or withhold funds for the support of political candidates. In the 40th Annual Report of the American Civil Liberties Union, for instance we read the ACLU stand on a ruling by the Georgia Supreme Court. This ruling now reversed by the U.S. Supreme Court held that the union shop agreements were unconstitutional "on the grounds that such contracts interfered with the freedom of opinion of workers who disagreed with the union's political stand." Said the ACLU, "while the rights of a dissenting minority within a union should be recognized, they cannot thwart the will of the majority to have their dues used for political purposes. . . . So long as such (minority) members have an effective right to participate in the decision making process within the union, including the right to vote for union officials of their choice, they are not deprived of their civil liberties."

In other words, if the majority votes to spend the minority's dues money on electing a president or governor or congressman to whom the minority is opposed, that is perfectly all right because the minority had the right to "object." What is the difference between this and permitting the victorious Democratic Party in Washington from imposing on the defeated Republican Party the obligation to provide the Democrats with funds to support their next campaign? Would Republican rights be

TO SET MEN FREE

protected just because they had the right to "object?" Forcing a man to contribute to the defeat of his own preferred candidate for public office is no different from denying him the right to vote.

But even worse than that, the ACLU supports the notion that if a union member dissents from his labor bosses' actions and tries to change the course of union policy, he has the right to dissent, but he may be disciplined for doing so if union leaders think he is "taking steps leading directly to the union's detriment." The ACLU committee said, that where "the relationship between the advocacy of an idea and the union's well being is itself highly debatable, disciplinary proceedings should be closely limited . . . , if discipline is to be imposed because of open advocacy of contrary opinion in a forum of the member's choice, the burden of establishing the gravity of the offense should rest with the union."

What does this mean? It means that when a member speaks out against union leadership and the bosses consider his objections a "detriment" to the union (by which they often mean their own personal power), he can be disciplined by the bosses or their representatives acting as judge, jury, and prosecutor. This is a curious concept of "civil liberty." If it were applied to the Federal government, instead of the government of a labor union, the ACLU itself would be subject to discipline by the President if it criticized the government in a way that the President thought to be to the "detriment" of the country.

No wonder the checked-off man has so few defenders in the United States when even the Civil Liberties Union has abandoned him to the arbitrary power of the union boss. No wonder labor bosses like Hoffa and Reuther have been so easily able "to strangle the still small private voice that is God's spark in man."

We have seen how well the union leadership protects the rights of individual workers in monopoly unions. As William G. Caples, writing in the January issue of the *Annals of the Ameri-*

can Academy of Political and Social Science reminds us, "The Teamsters have been expelled from the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations . . . but can it be said that the AFL-CIO or the Teamsters has more internal democracy because of it? And the Carpenters Union has not dropped any of its bars to Negro membership because the AFL-CIO adopted its Ethical Practices Policy."

The freedom of the checked-off man will not come from action by unions. It can only come through both Federal and state legislation. The most vital provision of any such laws is the abolition of the compulsory check-off and the prohibition of compulsory union membership. I do not believe that the liberation of the checked-off serf in labor's kingdom will come just by imposing the anti-monopoly provisions of the anti-trust laws upon unions or by banning industrywide bargaining. Those remedies are aimed at other union abuses. Nor do I believe that legal bans against use of union dues for political purposes will protect the checked-off man's political rights. Such legal bans have been tried and failed. Nor would mere abolition of the National Labor Relations Board or repeal of the National Labor Relations Act set the worker free from the compulsions of monopoly unionism. Only when the individual workingman is free to decide for himself whether to support union policies, support union political candidates, support a strike or oppose it, and work to change his union leadership if he wishes—only when his human rights to these actions are protected by law will he be a free man again. The end of the checkoff and the abolition of compulsory union membership are the key to the liberation of the American worker so that he can "use his powers for himself and for the commonwealth."

If workers are no longer compelled to join or remain in unions, they themselves can decide whether their leaders should use the strike as a weapon in bargaining. They themselves can decide whether or not to pay dues for political candidates or

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support a political party. They themselves can decide whether to join a strike or continue to work. They will be in control of their unions instead of having their unions in control of them.

*

What the union member wants from both management and his union leaders alike is respect. As union leader Joe McCarthy put it about Parlin management, "These people are entirely different. They respect you. You can give them your point of view, and even though they don't say yes all the time, you never have the feeling that you were sandbagged." Does Hoffa respect his Teamster workers? Can they give him their point of view without being sandbagged? Can Reuther's union men and women get a hearing from their powerful rulers?

Edward Levinson in "Labor on the March" writes that millions of workers were admitted to the CIO only after making the following pledge, "I do sincerely promise, of my own free will, to bear true allegiance to, and keep inviolate the principles of the Committee for Industrial Organization . . . to defend on all occasions and to the extent of my ability the members of our organization. I promise to cease work at any time I am called upon by the organization to do so."¹ Not only is the checked-off man forced to pay dues to an organization he may oppose, he is forced "of my own free will" to swear to support whatever the *organization* decides he should do about going to work. He has, in effect, to swear fealty to a feudal monarchy!

Unions were formed originally to protect the rights of working men to live and work according to their own individual principles and to bargain with their employers for their labor. But today the compulsory, monopoly union denies the rights of working men and women to live and work and vote as they please and to bargain for their labor freely according to their own decisions. We have seen, in the General Electric strike, that

where the members of the union were not compelled to be members they could decide for themselves whether to sell their labor at a stated price by refusing to heed the strike call of their leaders. In Hoffa's and Reuther's unions, members have little chance to do that!

The United States is one of the few free countries in the world that even permits unions to compel workers to join. Compulsory unionism is banned either by constitution, law, or judicial decision in France, West Germany, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Austria, Switzerland, Norway, and Sweden. The Labor Party in Australia has voted to take a demand for compulsory unionism out of its platform.² Outside the United States compulsory union membership is required only in the Soviet Union.

The President of the British Trades Union Congress has stated, "The principle of voluntary association is valid in its application to every activity of citizenship. It is the guarantee against class tyranny, government dictatorship, and the servile state."³ The President of the British Union of Transport and General Workers has said, "We believe that trade union organization is best built on the basis of conviction, by persuading people that you have something of value to offer them, some service to give them in return for their membership. . . . We want to bring home to our people a sense of responsibility, a sense of comradeship, and by and through their conviction that trade unionism is worth while, to secure the one hundred per cent organization for which we are striving."⁴

As the union-minded magazine *Commonweal* has put it, "The union still has the power to deprive the man of his rights as a member . . . the power over a man's job is the power over his life . . . and so it happens that in one of the freest countries in the world you run into these pockets of tyranny, dictatorship, ruthless and violent absolutism, where men, American men, live and work in a state of fear that can only be compared to life under

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communism and fascism.”⁵ It is even worse. In the free United States men and women can be, and are being forced to join unions dominated by communists or run by gangsters. Our Supreme Court has only recently ruled that membership in the Communist Party is illegal if the accused knows the aims and plans of the Party. Yet American workers are today forced into unions run by outlaws and violators of the laws of the United States!

Only by a national law ending compulsory unionism can the American worker regain control of his union and end the “taxation without representation” that has been imposed on him by the union shop monopoly. Only when Congress outlaws compulsory unionism and provides that the majority can no longer coerce the minority by forcing it to abide by both its economic and political decisions, will it be possible for unions to bargain in good faith for those who voluntarily want them to do so. This should automatically bring about the abolition of the National Labor Relations Board. As Sylvester Petro puts it, “The special privileges of compulsion granted unions by the NLRA (The National Labor Relations Act) must be repealed, and personal freedom must be restored to working men. The present right of workers to join or not join unions free of coercion by employers and unions should be strengthened. This can be done best by repealing the majority-rule principle, leaving unions to represent only those employees who want such representation, not those who vote against it. The duty to bargain must be repealed, for it cannot be enforced without reaching a result that nobody wants: namely agreements compelled by government.

“With the repeal of the majority rule principle and the duty to bargain, there will no longer be a need of conducting representation elections. When that point is reached no need for an administrative agency will exist at all, and the NLRB may be abolished with no loss to anyone concerned. . . .

"With the abolition of the NLRB, full jurisdiction in labor disputes will revert to the state and federal courts scattered around the country. These genuine courts have no ideological axe to grind. They feel that their function is to find the facts truly and well, and to develop the law on the basis of standards evolved over the centuries."⁶

The NLRB is an administrative tribunal which, as we have seen in the Glimco and Kohler chapters, operates much like a kangaroo court. While its decisions and regulations are subject to court review, nevertheless the NLRB stands between the working man and the union boss—protecting the latter at the expense of the former. Its decisions, as in the Kohler case, are based on political considerations rather than precedent and justice. As Petro observed, "The Kohler Company was held guilty of unlawfully refusing to bargain (by the NLRB) only during the periods in which it engaged in sustained negotiations. During all the periods in which it absolutely refused to meet with the union the company was held to have committed no violation of the duty to bargain."⁷

This is upside down thinking. You are guilty of refusing to bargain while you are bargaining, and not guilty of refusing to bargain while you are refusing to bargain. How can this be called justice? How can delay for months, sometimes years, as in the Glimco case, before any decision is reached on the rights of union members be called justice?

The NLRB is a political agency, unlike the courts, since it is subject to complete control by the administration which appoints it. Judges are chosen for life in most federal courts, and for long terms in state courts. The NLRB members have to please their political bosses or they will be out when their terms expire.

In addition the rules under which the NLRB operates cannot work. As Petro describes it, "On the one hand the law compels an employer to bargain in good faith; on the other hand, it de-

clares that an employer need make no concession or reach any agreement. But attempting to force good-faith bargaining without compelling agreement or concession has proved a hopeless job. It has led the NLRB further into the bargaining process, until now the NLRB can be seen dictating the terms of agreement."⁸ This is not free collective bargaining. It has become what amounts to government coercion in labor disputes.

Other critics of the power of labor monopoly have proposed that the anti-trust laws be applied to labor unions as they are to industrial monopolies. This seems to be a fair enough approach. The anti-trust laws were not anti-business laws—they were just anti-trust. Likewise the application of anti-monopoly laws to labor unions would not be anti-labor but anti-monopoly. It would be a process of freeing the union member from exploitation.

There are growing signs that Hoffa and Reuther mean to extend their monopoly powers as far as they can throughout this country and even abroad. Hoffa is now engaged in "a master plan to win for the Teamsters the power to paralyze the nation's transport with a general strike at 12:01 AM, February 1, 1964."⁹ He is seeking to have all his contracts with truckers expire on the same date in 1964 and then he will demand a "master contract" covering every Teamster's Union in the country. If he doesn't get what he wants, he can paralyze the entire nation in a single day. Food deliveries, milk deliveries, industrial deliveries could all be halted—stopping both the nation's sustenance and its factories. This one man will have more power over the life and death of the nation than the President of the United States. Unless Hoffa is curbed first by ending compulsory unionism, and second by breaking up his monopoly power through anti-trust legislation, he could be a greater threat to the nation than internal communism has ever been.

Walter Reuther has even bigger aims. He plans to seek international monopoly control over workers—beginning in the

automobile industry. He will seek cooperation "in pursuit of common objectives" from perhaps a dozen American, French, German, English, and Japanese auto manufacturers perhaps by 1965.¹⁰ Already 2,500,000 auto-workers are organized into unions in North and South America, Europe, Australia, Asia, and Africa. Most of them are linked in some way with Reuther's UAW in the Automotive Division of the eight million member International Metalworkers Federation. Reuther is President of this organization. A recent IMF declaration proposed "(1) closing the now widening gap between production capacity and demand in the world automobile market; (2) harmonizing wages and social benefits of automobile workers everywhere to the maximum extent possible; and (3) introducing a greater measure of social responsibility into production and investment decisions."¹¹ As long as Reuther's power in the United States continues to be virtually unlimited by law, he will certainly move toward domination of the international automobile industry. Today he can close the entire auto industry in the United States if he wants to do so. Tomorrow he hopes to be able to do the same thing throughout the world.

Power unchecked begets more power. Reuther is the kind of man of whom Jefferson was thinking when he said, "In questions of power let no more be heard of confidence in man, but bind him down from mischief by the chains of the Constitution."¹²

It may well be that if compulsory union membership is abolished, union members and non-members will be able to hold in check the tremendous power now exercised over the nation by their bosses. It may be that bans on industrywide bargaining or application of the anti-trust laws will be unnecessary when workers are able to control their own unions instead of being controlled by them. So I believe that the first and most important step in freeing American labor and curbing the unbridled power of men like Hoffa and Reuther is to outlaw compulsory

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union membership. Once this is done, Congress can survey the results and see if these other controlling steps are necessary to the preservation of a free society. I would hope that no other labor legislation would be necessary, since there is far too much interference by government in the bargaining process already. The best bargains for both labor and management are made directly between free agents bargaining without supervision—as we saw in Chapter XIII.

Liberty of choice for the American working man and woman—that should be the goal. Then the Forgotten Man—the checked-off man—will at last be free.

NOTES

1. John E. Coogan, S. J., "*Voluntary Unionism for Free Americans*," (Published by the National Right To Work Committee, 1025 Connecticut Avenue, Washington 6, D. C.) p. 3

2. *Ibid.*, p. 8

3. *Ibid.*, p. 7

4. *Ibid.*, p. 7

5. *Ibid.*, p. 14

6. Sylvester Petro, *The Kohler Strike* (Henry Regnery Co., Chicago, 1960) p. 111

7. *Ibid.*, p. 102

8. *Ibid.*, p. 105

9. Victor Riesel Column, "Will Hoffa Trigger A Nationwide Strike?" *Human Events*, April 28, 1961

10. See *Business Week Magazine*, January 28, 1961

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Kentucky Resolutions*, November 1798

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