

# BROTHER TO BROTHER

# WORKER TO WORKER



The late President John F. Kennedy (shown second from left with AFL-CIO and AIFLD President George Meany, Social Projects Director William Doherty, Jr., of the American Institute for Free Labor Development, and Project Supervisor Capt. Andrew Klay in November, 1963) views a model of the Mexico City housing project, later to be named in his memory.....

THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR FREE  
LAW WORKING WITH THE

# The John F. Kennedy Memorial Housing Project

## ... A Great International Development of Free Labor

This is a story that began in 1955.

It began with a shortage of worker housing in Mexico City—and the determination of some three thousand members of one of Mexico's free unions not only to live better but to become the owners of homes.

Members of Mexico's Graphic Arts Workers union decided nearly 10 years ago: "We, ourselves, will build our

own homes. We will build them together."

The union selected and bought a site—on the outskirts of Mexico City; its members voted to assess themselves 6%—an average of fifteen pesos—from every paycheck, to meet the land payments; by 1962, seven years later, designs had been drawn and a discouraging search was long underway for money for the construction.

### The role of the AFL-CIO and the American Institute for Free Labor Development

In 1962, acting upon appeal by the union, the new American Institute for Free Labor Development entered the situation, to act as catalyst and to arrange financing and technical aid to bring the project to completion.

The AFL-CIO of the United States of America, its participation obtained by the AIFLD, now came in as the financial patron of the project, with a \$10,000,000 loan to be repaid over a period of 20 years. The loan was guaranteed by the Agency for International Development, under the far-reaching support of the Alliance for Progress.

There was, first, however, the problem of land. Because the first site was outside the actual city limits and beyond reach of water and sewage, the original property had to be abandoned: it was traded to the City of Mexico for the present in-town site, between the center of Mexico City and its airport. This was done by the Mexican Government agency FOVI through the assistance of Mexico's Trade Union Confederation, the CTM, in collaboration with the Inter-American Labor Organization (ORIT). To accommodate to the more valuable but less extensive area, a design

for individual housing was abandoned and the project was shaped for high-rise apartments designed by world famous Architect Mario Pani.

In 1963, after eight years, the members of the Graphic Arts Workers Union, shortly to be joined as participants by members of other Mexican free unions, now watched as their apartment buildings rose—and saw that they were within reach of their goal. They had been the first "to dream the dream"—when they, breath-takingly, entered upon their program little such worker housing existed in Mexico. Other large-scale housing projects, meanwhile, had risen, but theirs was the first union-paid project in the history of Mexico. Also it was the first of its kind in the Americas.

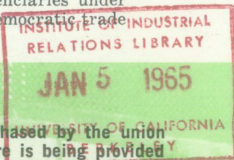
The project is the largest of its type to be undertaken in the hemisphere. Others, also under AIFLD auspices, are in progress or planned from Mexico to Argentina.

The Mexican workers were the first beneficiaries under a program for the furtherance of free and democratic unionism throughout the Americas.

### FACTS ABOUT THE PROJECT

- The name "John F. Kennedy Memorial Housing Project" was selected by vote of the Graphic Arts Workers Union of Mexico.
- The money came from pension and welfare funds of AFL-CIO affiliated unions; the investment was guaranteed under the program of the U.S. Agency for International Development.
- Number of buildings: 96—including four-story apartment buildings, schools and shopping center structures.

- The apartment houses will be purchased by the union members in payments like rent. Furniture is being provided as part of the project.
- Started: December, 1963. Completed: November, 1964.
- Number of units: 3,100. The project will house 18 thousand persons.
- The organizing agency: The American Institute for Free Labor Development—The AIFLD.



Washington, 1964?