

## Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

Featuring collections from the Western Reserve Historical Society and The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives

MS-4787: Abba Hillel Silver Papers, 1902-1989.

Series IV: Sermons, 1914-1963, undated.

Reel Box Folder 168 61 1066

The Newspaper Strike, 1963.

permon 987

SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE February 24, 1963 Dr. Abba Hillel Silver

## THE NEWSPAPER STRIKE

OUR CLEVELAND NEWSPAPER STRIKE SEEMS TO BE DRAWING TO

A CLOSE. IT HAS ALREADY LASTED EIGHTY-SEVEN DAYS -- AS LONGDRAWN-OUT AND FUTILE A STRIKE AS I CAN RECALL. BOTH LABOR AND
MANAGEMENT LOST IN THIS STRIKE, AS INDEED THEY ALWAYS DO IN ANY
PROLONGED STRIKE. THE WORKERS WILL NEVER RECOVER THE WAGES
WHICH THEY LOST IN THE TWELVE WEEKS STRIKE, EVEN IF TO TAKES
INTO ACCOUNT THE WAGE INCREASES OF FROM SEVEN-FIFTY TO TEN
DOLLARS A WEEK OVER TWO YEARS WHICH THEY WILL RECEIVE UNDER
THE TERMS OF THE NEW CONTRACT. THE PUBLISHERS HAVE UNDOUBTEDLY
SUSTAINED SERIOUS FINANCIAL LOSSES, EVEN ALLOWING FOR THE INSURANCE BENEFITS WHICH THEY RECEIVED. ONE CANNOT ESTIMATE
THE LOSS IN MORALE AND ESPRIT- DE-CORPS AMONG THE WORKERS,
AND THE RESIDUAL SULLENNESS AND DISAFFECTION WHICH CANNOT BUT
HARM AS SENSITIVE AN ORGANISM AS A NEWSPAPER.

THE PUBLIC AT LARGE WAS GREATLY AND NEEDLESSLY INCON-VENIENCED BY THE STRIKE, AND INSOFAR AS THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF A COMMUNITY IS AFFECTED BY A NEWSPAPER STRIKE, OURS, TOO, WAS AFFECTED. THE STRIKE HAS AT NO TIME BEEN POPULAR AMONG OUR PEOPLE.

NEITHER STRIKERS NOR PUBLISHERS SUCCEEDED IN PERSUADING THE

PUBLIC ON THE MERITS OF THEIR CASE. THERE HAS BEEN NO POPULAR

SUPPORT FOR ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER. THE PUBLIC REMAINED GENERALLY

APATHETIC, INDIFFERENT, AND ANNOYED.

EVEN THE GREAT DEBATE WHICH WAS HELD AT THE CITY CLUB ON FEBRUARY SIXTH BETWEEN MR. LOUIS B. SELTZER, EDITOR OF THE CLEVELAND PRESS AND NEWS, AND NOEL WICAL, WHO WAS ASSIGNED BY THE NEWSPAPER GUILD TO BE ITS SPOKESMAN, FAILED TO AROUSE MUCH ENTHUSIASM IN OUR COMMUNITY FOR ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER.

I LISTENED TO THAT DEBATE CLOSELY, AS DID INDEED TENS OF
THOUSANDS OF OTHERS. I HAVE SINCE RE-READ CAREFULLY THE TRANSCRIPT OF THAT DEBATE. I MUST CONFESS THAT I WAS LEFT UNCONVINCED,
AND WITH A REAL FEELING OF BAFFLEMENT. WHAT THESE MEN WERE
SAYING SO EARNESTLY, AND AT TIMES WITH SUCH PASSION -- DID ALL THAT
JUSTIFY THE COSTLY AND PROTRACTED STRIKE AND THE UNBREAKABLE
DEADLOCK IN NEGOTIATIONS IN SO VITAL AND SENSITIVE AN INDUSTRY AS
A NEWSPAPER?

I FAILED TO DISCOVER THE CLEAR-CUT MORAL ISSUES WHICH WERE INVOLVED AND WHICH WERE OF SUCH A MAGNITUDE AS TO JUSTIFY THE UNYIELDING AND UNCOMPROMISING POSITIONS WHICH BOTH SIDES TOOK.

THE NEWSPAPER GUILD PRESENTED NO SERIOUS GRIEVANCES, NO CHARGES OF INADEQUATE PAY FOR ITS MEMBERS, OR LONG HOURS OR

BAD WORKING CONDITIONS. THERE WERE THE NORMAL DEMANDS FOR PAY RAISES AND OTHER BENEFITS WHICH ARE USUALLY PUT FORWARD AT THE BARGAINING TABLE WHEN A NEW CONTRACT IS TO BE SIGNED. IT IS GENERALLY AGREED THAT WAGE INCREASES IN CERTAIN INDUSTRIES ARE, FROM TIME TO TIME, JUSTIFIED. THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES HAS ADVISED THE UNIONS WHO SEEK HIGHER WAGES NOT TO ASK WAGE INCREASES OVER THREE PERCENT A YEAR -- A FIGURE WHICH IS APPROXIMATELY EQUAL TO THE ANNUAL INCREASE IN THE PRODUCTIVITY OF AMERICAN INDUSTRY. THIS REQUEST WAS MADE IN ORDER TO AVERT INFLATION. BUT THESE ROUTINE MATTERS WERE NOT THE STUMBLING BLOCK WHICH STALLED THE NEGOTIATIONS AND BROUGHT ON THE STRIKE. THE ISSUE WHICH BROUGHT ON THE STRIKE WAS UNION SECURITY, THE DEMAND THAT ALL EMPLOYEES IN THE COMMERCIAL DEPARTMENT OF THE PRESS, OR AT LEAST NINE OUT OF TEN OF ALL NEW EMPLOYEES, SHOULD BE MADE TO JOIN THE GUILD OR PAY DUES.

THE REASON FOR THIS DEMAND IS THAT NON-UNION EMPLOYEES
RECEIVE ALL THE BENEFITS FROM THE CONTRACTS WHICH THE GUILD
NEGOTIATES. THE GUILD IS REQUIRED BY LAW, AS THE BARGAINING
AGENT, TO NEGOTIATE NOT ALONE FOR ITS OWN MEMBERS BUT ALSO FOR
ALL NON-UNION EMPLOYEES WORKING ON THE NEWSPAPER. THE NONUNION EMPLOYEES PROFIT FROM THE BENEFITS WHICH THE GUILD WINS
FOR THEM, BUT THEY PAY NOTHING FOR IT. THEY ARE, AS IT WERE,
FREE-RIDERS.

THERE IS IN MY JUDGMENT MERIT TO THIS ARGUMENT. I EXPRESSED MYSELF ON THIS VERY SUBJECT A FEW YEARS AGO WHEN THE "RIGHT TO WORK" ISSUE WAS BEING HOTLY DEBATED IN OUR STATE, AND WAS ACTUALLY BEING VOTED ON BY OUR PEOPLE. THE "RIGHT TO WORK" MOVEMENT AIMED, UNDER A DECEPTIVE SLOGAN, TO FORBID LABOR AND MANAGEMENT TO ENTER INTO UNION SECURITY AGREEMENTS, TO HAMPER TRADE-UNIONS IN COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND TO KEEP UNIONS FROM GROWING. IT WAS DIRECTED NOT ONLY AGAINST THE CLOSED SHOP WHERE IT IS NECESSARY TO BE A UNION MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING TO GET A JOB. AND AGAINST THE UNION SHOP, WHERE THE EMPLOYEE MUST JOIN THE UNION WITHIN A GIVEN PERIOD AFTER HIRING IN ORDER TO KEEP HIS JOB, BUT ALSO AGAINST PREFERENTIAL HIRING WHERE PREFERENCE IS GIVEN TO UNION MEMBERS IN HIRING NEW WORKERS. IT WAS DIRECTED ALSO AGAINST MAINTENANCE OF MEMBERSHIP -- WHERE ALL EMPLOYEES WHO ARE UNION MEMBERS OR WHO BECOME UNION MEMBERS MUST REMAIN IN THE UNION FOR THE DURATION OF THE LABOR AGREEMENT, AND THE AGENCY SHOP (OR DUES SHOP) WHERE EMPLOYEES WHO DO NOT WISH TO BECOME UNION MEMBERS MUST NEVER-THELESS PAY DUES TO THE UNION. IN OTHER WORDS, THE "RIGHT TO WORK" MOVEMENT WAS AGAINST ALL TRADE UNIONISM.

I STATED MY OPPOSITION TO THIS MOVEMENT FROM OUR PULPIT ON OCTOBER 8, 1958. IT WAS REPORTED IN THE CLEVELAND NEWSPAPERS AND WAS QUOTED WIDELY DURING THE CAMPAIGN. I SAID:

"PERHAPS THE VARIOUS GROUPS WHO HAVE BECOME SO CONCERNED
ABOUT A FREE CITIZEN'S RIGHT TO WORK...COULD TELL US HOW TO
ENSURE THE RIGHT TO WORK TO THE OVER FIVE MILLION UNEMPLOYED

WHO ARE ABLE-BODIED, COMPETENT, AND WHO WISH TO WORK AND TO EARN A LIVING FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR FAMILIES, BUT WHO ARE DENIED THEIR RIGHT TO WORK DURING RECESSIONARY PERIODS IN OUR ECONOMY.

THE SAME GROUP OF PEOPLE NOW CLAMORING FOR THE THEORETIC RIGHT TO WORK, FOUGHT BITTERLY IN 1930 AGAINST THE ENACTMENT OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE WHICH HAS PROVED SUCH A LIFE-SAVER IN SUCCESSIVE PERIODS OF RECESSION AND WHICH TODAY MANY RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE, INCLUDING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, ARE URGING THAT ITS BENEFITS BE EXTENDED.

EVEN IN THOSE DESPERATE YEARS WHEN SIXTEEN MILLION OF OUR PEOPLE WERE UNEMPLOYED AND HEADS OF FAMILIES WERE SELLING APPLES ON THE STREET CORNERS IN ORDER TO EARN A FEW PENNIES FOR THEIR FAMILIES, OUR UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROPOSAL WAS FOUGHT BITTERLY BY THE POWERFUL BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS IN OHIO ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT WAS UN-AMERICAN, RADICAL, SOCIALISTIC, AND THAT IT REWARDED IDLENESS.

EVERY MAN IN A FREE SOCIETY SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO WORK.

BUT EVERY MAN, ONCE HE FINDS EMPLOYMENT, ALSO HAS THE MORAL

DUTY TO JOIN AN ORGANIZATION OF FELLOW WORKERS WHICH ACHIEVED

FOR HIM THROUGH ITS ORGANIZED EFFORTS THE FAVORABLE CONDITIONS

HE ENJOYS IN HIS EMPLOYMENT AND AFFORDS HIM PROTECTION FOR THE

FUTURE. EVERYONE IS MORALLY OBLIGATED TO SHARE IN THE RESPONSI 
BILITY TO ASSUME THE OBLIGATIONS WHICH ASSURE HIM THE VERY THINGS

WHICH HE SEEKS IN HIS EMPLOYMENT.

ORGANIZED LABOR, OF COURSE, IS NOT WITHOUT ITS SHORTCOMINGS.

AT TIMES IT IS MOST <u>UNREASONABLE</u>. BUT SO IS MANAGEMENT. IT HAS

BEEN GRATIFYING TO NOTE THE COURAGEOUS AND STATESMANLIKE

ACTION WHICH RESPONSIBLE LEADERS OF LABOR HAVE TAKEN IN AN

ATTEMPT TO CLEAN THE HOUSE OF LABOR OF ITS GRAFTERS AND CORRUPTIONISTS.

IT HAS BEEN MY CONVICTION FOR MANY YEARS THAT NO FREE
SOCIETY AND NO FREE ECONOMY CAN LONG ENDURE IN THE MODERN
WORLD WITHOUT A STRONG ORGAN IZATION OF ITS WORKING PEOPLE. A
STRONG LABOR MOVEMENT NOT ONLY PROTECTS WORKERS AGAINST EXPLOITATION BUT, AT THE SAME TIME, WILL SAVE CAPITALISM AND FREE
ENTERPRISE FROM THOSE VERY ABUSES WHICH ULTIMATELY DESTROY IT. "

BUT WHILE IT IS HIGHLY DESIRABLE THAT ALL WORKERS SHOULD
BELONG TO A UNION AND THE UNION SHOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO
PERSUADE ALL WORKERS TO JOIN IT, THIS IS CLEARLY THE RESPONSIBILITY
OF LABOR, NOT OF MANAGEMENT. IF MANAGEMENT WISHES TO COOPERATE
IN ACHIEVING THIS RESULT --SO MUCH THE BETTER. BUT TO FORCE
A STRIKE OVER THIS ISSUE AND TO PROLONG IT IS UNWARRANTED. MANY
MEMBERS OF THE GUILD HAVE SINCE DECLARED THAT UNION SECURITY
WAS NOT A PART OF THE MOTION TO STRIKE WHICH WAS PASSED ON
NOVEMBER THIRTIETH.

THE FIRST TIME THE QUESTION OF UNION SECURITY WAS BROUGHT THE PRESS UNIT MEETING ON JANUARY TO A DIRECT VOTE WAS AT TWENTY-FOURTH. A MOTION TO INSTRUCT THE NEGOTIATORS TO ACCEPT MANAGEMENT'S LATEST OFFER ON THE ISSUE -- THAT IS, MAINTENANCE OF MEMBERSHIP -- AND TO PROCEED TO OTHER ISSUES, ACTUALLY CARRIED BY A NARROW VOTE OF NINETY-EIGHT TO NINETY-FIVE. A WEEK LATER THE VOTE WAS REVERSED BY A VOTE OF ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SEVEN TO ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY. CLEARLY THERE WAS A SHARP DIVISION OF OPINION OVER THIS ISSUE AMONG GUILD MEMBERS THEMSELVES. MANY MEMBERS OF THE GUILD WERE THEMSELVES OPPOSED TO THE UNION SHOP AND THE AGENCY SHOP. THEY DID NOT FAVOR COMPULSORY MEMBERSHIP. WHY THEN WAS THE STRIKE CONTINUED FOR SO LONG OVER THIS ONE ISSUE, OVER WHICH THERE WAS SUCH SHARP DIVISION OF OPINION WITHIN THE GUILD - D AN ISSUE ON WHICH THE GUILD HAD FINALLY TO CAPITULATE?

POSITION WHICH WAS TAKEN BY MR. SELTZER. HE MAINTAINED THAT
THE ISSUE WAS ONE OF A FREE PRESS. IF EMPLOYEES WERE FORCED TO

JOIN THE GUILD, THEN THE EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE OF THE NEWSPAPER
WOULD BE ENDANGERED. BUT, THE GUILD'S DEMANDS WERE LIMITED TO
EMPLOYEES IN THE COMMERCIAL DEPARTMENT.—TO THOSE WHO HANDLE
THE ADVERTISING, THE CIRCULATION AND THE BUSINESS ACCOUNTS—
NOT TO THOSE IN THE EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT. THE GUILD IS AN INDUSTRIAL UNION WHICH YEARS AGO JOINED THE C.I.O. IT THEREFORE,
AS A MATTER OF COURSE, INCLUDES ALL EMPLOYEES—COMMERCIAL
AS WELL AS EDITORIAL—IN THE ONE GUILD. BUT IT DOES NOT

NECESSARILY FOLLOW THAT COMPULSORY UNION MEMBERSHIP IN THE COMMERCIAL DEPARTMENT WOULD LEAD TO SIMILAR COMPULSORY MEMBERSHIP IN THE EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT.

NEGOTIATION, DEMANDS MAY BE MADE FOR COMPULSORY UNION MEMBERSHIP ALSO IN THE EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT. BUT WHY NOT FACE THE

ISSUE IF AND WHEN IT COMES UP? AND EVEN IF THE EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT FULLY UNIONIZED -- AND BY THE WAY, NINETY TO NINETY-FIVE
PERCENT OF THE EMPLOYEES OF EDITORIAL DEPARTMENTS OF THE PRESS
AND THE PLAIN DEALER ARE ALREADY MEMBERS OF THE GUILD -- IT

DOES NOT FOLLOW THAT THE GUILD WOULD ATTEMPT TO CONTROL THE

EDITORIAL POLICY OF THE PAPER OR TO DICTATE TO THE MEN WHO

WRITE OR EDIT THE NEWS. THE CONSTITUTION OF THE AMERICAN NEWSPAPER GUILD LIMITS ITS ACTIVITIES TO MATTERS WHICH HAVE TO DO WITH

WAGES, HOURS AND WORKING CONDITIONS AND NOT WITH WHAT ITS MEMBERS

WRITE OR THINK.

COULD NOT MR. SELTZER HAVE TAKEN A LESS DOGMATIC AND YEARY

WYIELDING POSITION ON THIS ISSUE? COULD HE NOT HAVE HELPED THE

GUILD TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM WHICH WAS GREATLY TROUBLING IT,

NAMELY. THE PROBLEM OF A HEALTHIER ATMOSPHERE IN THE COMMERCIAL

DEPARTMENT THE PROBLEM OF THE UNFRIENDLY AND ANTI-UNION

SUPERVISORY PERSONNEL IN THE COMMERCIAL DEPARTMENT OF THE

PRESS. THE PEOPLE WHOM MR. WICAL CALLED THE "STRAW BOSSES"

"WHO OPENLY AND CONTINUALLY EXPRESS THEIR CONTEMPT FOR THE

GUILD AND ALL WHO JOIN IT". THIS, THE GUILD CLAIMS WAS THE MAJOR

REASON FOR THE PRESENT STRIKE.

ALL WORKERS TODAY ARE DESPERATELY CONCERNED WITH THE SECURITY OF THEIR JOBS. THEY LOOK UPON A STRONG UNION AS THEIR SOLE SECURITY. MR. SELTZER HAS HAD NO DIFFICULTY WORKED WITH TEN OTHER UNIONS IN HIS PLANT IN WHITE UNION MEMBERSHIP IS COMPULSORY.

THERE WAS EVIDENTLY A GREAT DEAL OF BITTERNESS AND ACRIMONY IN THE MONTHS OF NEGOTIATION WHICH PRECEDED THE STRIKE AND IN THE MONTHS AFTER THE STRIKE WAS DECLARED. AN OUTSIDER DOES NOT KNOW THE WHY AND WHEREFOR OF ALL THIS RANCOR AND ANGER. THE AMERICAN NEWSPAPER GUILD, OF WHICH THE CLEVELAND GUILD IS LOCAL NO. 1, WAS ACTUALLY FOUNDED HERE IN CLEVELAND IN 1934. MR. LOUIS B. SELTZER, WHO WAS THEN EDITOR OF THE PRESS, WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN FOUNDING THIS GUILD. HE HAS BEEN ITS FRIEND AND CHAMPION RIGHT ALONG -- AS HE HAS BEEN THE FRIEND OF ORGANIZED LABOR GENERALLY. MR. SELTZER, WHO IS TODAY REGARDED AS THE DEAN OF AMERICAN EDITORS, IS A PROGRESSIVE AND LIBERAL MAN AND A CHAMPION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. HE IS LOVED AND RESPECTED BY HIS STAFF -- I SAY THIS NOT ONLY FROM MY PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE AND FROM THE TESTIMONY OF HIS CO-WORKERS, EVEN OF THOSE WHO WERE LEADERS IN THE PRESENT STRIKE AGAINST THE PRESS. MR. SELTZER IS CERTAINLY NO ENEMY OF LABOR. WHY THEN DID HE FIND HIMSELF WITH A TWELVE WEEK STRIKE ON HIS HANDS, A STRIKE WHICH WAS CALLED BY THE VERY GUILD WHICH HE HELPED TO FOUND AND FOSTER?

MR. SELTZER COMPLAINED BITTERLY IN HIS CITY CLUB DEBATE OF
TREACHERY, TRICKERY AND DECEIPT, OF LACK OF FAIRNESS AND
DEMOCRACY ON THE PART OF THE GUILD LEADERSHIP. THE GUILD STRIKE
VOTE WAS RUSHED THROUGH. MANY OF ITS MEMBERS HAD NOT BEEN
NOTIFIED. THIRTY PERCENT OF THEM WERE ABSENT. AT THE MEETING,
A MOTION TO TABLE AN IMMEDIATE STRIKE RESOLUTION -- THAT IS,
NOT TO TAKE HASTY ACTION -- WAS LOST BY ONLY FIVE VOTES -- ONE
HUNDRED AND EIGHTEEN TO ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEEN.

ON THE CRUCIAL VOTE --"NOT TO RETURN TO WORK WITHOUT A

CONTRACT", I.E., TO STRIKE -- THERE WAS & GENERAL CONFUSION. NO

ATTEMPT WAS MADE TO SEE THAT ONLY THOSE IN GOOD STANDING VOTED.

NO BALLOTS HAD BEEN PREPARED. PIECES OF PAPER WERE TORN UP AND

DISTRIBUTED AND MEMBERS SCRIBBLED THEIR "YES" OR "NO" ON SEE

SCRAPS OF PAPER AND PUT THEM IN THE BOX. THE RESULT WAS ONE

HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SEVEN "YES" AND ONE HUNDRED AND FIVE "NO".

THE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SEVEN WHO VOTED FOR THE STRIKE

WERE ONLY THIRTY-EIGHT PERCENT OF THE PRESS GUILD MEMBERSHIP.

WHY WAS THERE SUCH A HURRY TO CALL A STRIKE? WHY WAS SUCH PRECIPITATE ACTION TAKEN? GRANTED THAT THE GUILD CONTRACT HAD EXPIRED, THE MEN COULD STILL HAVE CONTINUED TO WORK WHILE NEGOTIATIONS WERE GOING ON --IN THE SURE KNOWLEDGE THAT WHAT WAS FINALLY AGREED ON WOULD BE RETROACTIVE. WHY DID NOT THE VERY SIZE OF THE VOTE AGAINST STRIKING INDICATE TO THE LEADERSHIP OF

THE GUILD THAT THE STRIKE WAS NOT GENERALLY POPULAR WITH
THE MEMBERS -- THAT THEY SHOULD, THEREFORE, GO SLOW, RE-STUDY
THE SITUATION, TAKE A SOBER, SECOND THOUGHT. RESPONSIBLE TRADEUNION LEADERSHIP WOULD HAVE DONE JUST THAT.

OR MUST WE ASSUME THAT THE LEADERS BELIEVED THAT THE MOMENT

WAS ESPECIALLY PROPITIOUS -- JUST BEFORE THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS,

WHEN NEWSPAPER BUSINESS IS AT ITS PEAK -- TO FORCE A QUICK AC
QUIESCENCE ON THE PART OF THE PUBLISHERS. IF SO, THEY WERE

GROSSLY AND SADLY MISTAKEN. Sale spream tactus are self defeating
and mysice the cause of coercite brighting in the long run.

I AM INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT THERE IS CONSIDERABLE MERIT TO

ALL THIS POINTS UP THE SERIOUS PROBLEM OF INADEQUATE/LEADERSHIP WHICH IS GREATLY DISTURBING THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TODAY.

CRIES OF REMEDIAL LEGISLATION ARE BEING HEARD FROM MANY SIDES,

DEMANDS TO CURB THE UNIONS AND THE POWER OF ORGANIZED LABOR.

MR. SELTZER'S CONTENTION.

NEW YORK CITY, TOO, HAS HAD ALL OF ITS NINE DAILIES SHUT DOWN
BY A STRIKE -- THE LONGEST STRIKE IN THAT CITY'S NEWSPAPER HISTORY -ALMOST AS LONG AS OURS, AND IT THREATENS TO BE EVEN LONGER.
EVERY FORM OF MEDIATION, EVERY ATTEMPT TO SETTLE THE STRIKE HAS
FAILED. THE INTERVENTION OF MAYOR AND GOVERNOR, OF THE UNITED
STATES LABOR SECRETARY, MR. WIRTZ, EVEN THE APPOINTMENT OF A
PANEL OF THREE EMINENT JUDGES TO CONSTITUTE A BOARD OF PUBLIC
ACCOUNTABILITY, IN ORDER TO HEAR WITNESSES FROM BOTH SIDES, HAVE
FAILED TO BREAK THE DEAD-LOCK. THE PANEL OF IMPARTIAL JUDGES

REPORTED THAT "THE STRIKE WAS A DELIBERATE DESIGN TO POSTPONE

ANY NEGOTIATION UNTIL A TIME WHEN THE PUBLISHERS WOULD BE

FORCED TO SURRENDER UNDER THE ECONOMIC PRESSURE OF THREATENED

EXTINCTION".

AND THE POSITION OF THE PUBLISHERS SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN "WE CAN TAKE IT LONGER THAN YOU CAN TAKE IT".

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING THUS BECOMES NOTHING MORE THAN

COLLECTIVE BLUDGEONING. THE BARGAINING TABLE BECOMES A

BATTLE-FIELD, AND THE ONLY CONSIDERATION IS HOW LONG THE PUBLISHERS

CAN TAKE THEIR HEAVY LOSSES AND HOW LONG THE UNION'S WAR-CHEST

CAN JOLD OUT. THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE IS NO LONGER REASONABLE

CONCESSION AND COMPROMISE, BUT SURRENDER. MR. BERTRAM POWERS,

HEAD OF THE INTERNATIONAL TYPOGRAPHICAL UNION, WHO HAS BEEN THE

MOS T TRUCULENT OF THE UNION LEADERS INVOLVED, SUMMED UP HIS

CONCEPTION OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN THESE WORDS: "THE ONLY

THING THAT COUNTS IS MUSCLE. IF DISPUTES WERE SETTLED BY REASON

OR JUSTICE, THERE WOULDN'T BE UNIONS."

THE TREND TO SETTLE INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES NOT ON THE BASIS

OF REASON OR JUSTICE, BUT BY SHEER MUSCLE HAS BECOME VERY MARKED

IN THE ACTIVITIES OF CERTAIN LABOR LEADERS AND IN THE STUBBORN
NESS AND TRUCULENCE OF CERTAIN REPRESENTATIVES OF MANAGEMENT.

SIGN
THESE NEGOTIATORS GO THROUGH THE MOTIONS OF SITTING AROUND THE ACTIVITY OF THE SETTEMBLE. THEY LISTEN TO THE PLEAS OF MEDIATORS ---

FOR DAYS AND WEEKS AND MONTHS -- AND NOTHING HAPPENS. THEY DOWN

BUDGES. THEY ARE WAITING TO SEE WHO WILL WEAR THE OTHER DOWN

FIRST. As in wrestling or prize-fighting the object is to flatten

or length- out your oppositent.

BOTH SIDES REJECT OUT OF HAND ALL FORMS OF ARBITRATION.

ARBITRATION TO THEM IS ANATHEMA, KREMLIN DICTATORSHIP! ONLY WHAT THEY ARE ENGAGED IN DOING IS DEMOCRACY AT ITS FINEST...

IN THIS CONNECTION, I WONDER WHY THE CLEVELAND NEWSPAPER

GUILD CAME OUT FOR ARBITRATION SO LATE IN THE DAY -- AFTER THE

STRIKE HAD DRAGGED ON FOR NINE WEEKS, AND WHY THE PUBLISHERS

OF BOTH THE PRESS AND PLAIN DEALER REJECTED ARBITRATION RIGHT

ALONG TO THE VERY END. WHEN NEGOTIATED ARE DEAD-LOCKED,

ALL FORMS OF MEDIATION FAIL TO BRING ABOUT AN AGREEMENT -
WHAT ELSE REMAINS BUT ARBITRATION? UNLESS EITHER OR BOTH PARTIES

ARE WILLING TO FIGHT IT OUT TO THE BITTER END -- WHERE MUSCLE

AND NOT REASON OR JUSTICE BECOMES THE FINAL ARBITER?

I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE ORGANIZED LABOR MOVEMENT IN OUR

COUNTRY WHICH HAS ACHIEVED SO MUCH FOR THE AMERICAN WORKING

MAN IN THE PAST BECAUSE WHAT IT ASKED FOR WAS JUST AND REASONABLE --
WILL NOW, WITH ITS WORK STILL UNFINISHED, AND WITH MANY GRAVE

PROBLEMS STILL CONFRONTING THE AMERICAN WORKING MAN, BE CONTENT

TO ABANDON ITS SOCIAL IDEALISM AND ITS APPEAL TO JUSTICE AND REASON

AND THE GOOD-WILL OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND WILL RELY REPEATTER

SOLELY ON MUSCLE -- ON RUTHLESS FORCE -- TO ACHIEVE ITS FUTURE OBJECTIVES.

THE MUSCLE-MAN IN THE AMERICAN LABOR UNION IS THE REAL ENEMY OF UNIONISM. SO IS THE CORRUPTIONIST AND THE RACKETEER.

SO IS THE UNION AGENT WHO PROVOKES A STRIKE SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEMONSTRATING TO THE RANK AND FILE THAT HE IS EARNING HIS SALARY, AND THAT HE IS ACTUALLY WORTH MORE BECAUSE HE GETS SO MUCH MORE FOR THEM, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE STRIKE IS JUSTIFIED OR NOT, AND INDIFFERENT TO THE DAMAGE WHICH THE STRIKE MAY CAUSE TO THE COMMUNITY.

WHAT SOME LABOR UNIONS NEED IS A HIGHER TYPE OF LABOR
STATESMANSHIP. THEY NEED MORE MEN WHO WILL THINK OF LABORMANAGEMENT RELATIONSHIP, NOT IN TERMS OF IRRECONCILABLE CONFLICT
BUT IN TERMS OF COOPERATION FOR THE COMMON GOOD. A CLASH AND
DIVERGENCE OF INTERESTS ARE, OF COURSE, INEVITABLE IN ALL LABORMANAGEMENT RELATIONS, BUT THEY NEED NOT BE, OF SUCH VEHEMENCE
AS TO BE MUTUALLY DESTRUCTIVE -- BAD FOR THE EMPLOYEE, BAD FOR
THE EMPLOYER, BAD FOR THE PUBLIC. SOME UNIONS HAVE IN THE PAST
HAPPILY PRODUCED THE STATESMANLIKE LEADERSHIP OF WHICH I SPEAK,
AND THE RESULTS HAVE BEEN EMINENTLY SATISFACTORY TO BOTH SIDES.

BEFORE ADVERSE LEGISLATION IS ENACTED -- AND IT IS CLEAR THAT
THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WILL NOT INDEFINITELY TOLERATE THE CONTINUING ABUSE, INTERRUPTION AND DISLOCATION OF THEIR ACCUSTOMED
WAY OF LIFE BY UNSCRUPULOUS LABOR POLITICIANS -- B EFORE SERIOUS

ANTAGONISMS DEVELOP BETWEEN ORGANIZED LABOR, THE AMERICAN
PEOPLE AND THEIR GOVERNMENT. UNIONS OUGHT TO EXAMINE THEMSELVES FRANKLY AND CHECK ON THE QUALITY OF THEIR LEADERS, AND
SEE WHETHER ENLIGHTENED AND REASONABLE COOPERATION WITH MANAGEMENT IS NOT THE BETTER WAY IN THE LONG RUN.

AND THIS APPLIES ALSO TO MANAGEMENT. THE WELL-BEING OF
THE AMERICAN WORKING MAN AND HIS FAMILY IS TO THE ADVANTAGE OF
A PROSPEROUS AMERICAN ECONOMY. WHATEVER IS UNJUSTLY DENIED
THE EMPLOYEE DOES NOT IN THE LONG RUN ACCRUE TO THE BENEFIT
OF THE EMPLOYER. WHEN THE EMPLOYER BARGAINS WITH HIS MEN FOR
A NEW CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT, HIS AIM SHOULD BE NOT HOW TO
OUTSMART OR OUTMANEUVER THEM, BUT HOW TO BE JUST AND REASONABLE.

I AM AFRAID THAT THE CLEVELAND NEWSPAPER STRIKE LASTED SO LONG BECAUSE THERE WAS TOO LITTLE OF REASONABLENESS ON EITHER SIDE. THERE WAS A MEASURE OF JUSTICE ON BOTH SIDES. BUT THERE WAS NOT ENOUGH OF WISDOM AND STATESMANSHIP. IN AN INDUSTRIAL DISPUTE, AS IN ALL OTHER DISPUTES IN OUR SOCIETY, WISDOM AND STATESMANSHIP MUST BE THE CRUCIAL AND DETERMINING FACTORS. WITHOUT THEM A PEOPLE PERISHES.

Sermon 987 SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE February 24, 1963 Dr. Abba Hillel Silver THE NEWSPAPER STRIKE Our Cleveland Newspaper Strike seems to be drawing to a close. It has already lasted eighty-seven days -- as long-drawn-out and futile a strike as I can recall. Both labor and management lost in this strike, as indeed they always do in any prolonged strike. The workers will never recover the wages which they lost in the twelve weeks strike, even if one takes into account the wage increases of from seven-fifty to ten dollars a week over two years which they will receive under the terms of the new contract. The publishers have undoubtedly sustained serious financial losses, even allowing for the insurance benefits which they received. One cannot estimate the loss in morale and esprit-de-corps among the workers, and the residual sullenness and disaffection which cannot but harm as sensitive an organism as a newspaper. The public at large was greatly and needlessly inconvenienced by the strike, and insofar as the economic life of a community is affected by a newspaper strike, ours, too, was affected. The strike has at no time been popular among our people. Neither strikers nor publishers succeeded in persuading the public on the merits of their case. There has been no popular support for one side or the other. The public remained generally apathetic, indifferent and annoyed. Even the great debate which was held at the City Club on February sixth between Mr. Louis B. Seltzer, Editor of the Cleveland Press and News, and Noel Wical, who was assigned by the Newspaper Guild to be its spokesman, failed to arouse much enthusiasm in our community for one side or the other.

I listened to that debate closely, as did indeed tens of thousands of others.

I have since re-read carefully the transcript of that debate. I must confess that

I was left unconvinced, and with a real feeling of bafflement. What these men were
saying so earnestly, and at times with such passion -- did all that justify the costly
and protracted strike and the unbreakable deadlock in negotiations in so vital and
sensitive an industry as a newspaper?

I failed to discover the clear-cut moral issues which were involved and which were of such a magnitude as to justify the unyielding and uncompromising positions which both sides took.

The newspaper Guild presented no serious grievances, no charges of inadequate pay for its members, or long hours or bad working conditions. There
were the normal demands for pay raises and other benefits which are usually put
forward at the bargaining table when a new contract is to be signed. It is generally
agreed that wage increases in certain industries are, from time to time, justified.

The President of the United States has advised the unions who seek higher wages
not to ask wage increases over three percent a year -- a figure which is approximately equal to the annual increase in the productivity of American industry. This
request was made in order to avert inflation. But these routine matters were not
the stumbling block which stalled the negotiations and brought on the strike. The
issue which brought on the strike was union security, the demand that all employees
in the Commercial Department of The Press, or at least nine out of ten of all
new employees, should be made to join the Guild or pay dues.

The reason for this demand is that non-Union employees receive all the benefits from the contracts which the Guild negotiates. The Guild is required by law, as the bargaining agent, to negotiate not alone for its own members but also for all non-Union employees working on the newspaper. The non-Union employees profit from the benefits which the Guild wins for them, but they pay nothing for it. They are, as it were, free-riders.

There is, in my judgment merit to this argument. I expressed myself on this very subject a few years ago when the "Right to Work" issue was being hotly debated in our state, and was actually being voted on by our people. The "Right to Work" movement aimed, under a deceptive slogan, to forbig labor and management to enter into union security agreements, to hamper trade-Unions in collective bargaining and to keep Unions from growing. It was directed not only against the Closed Shop where it is necessary to be a Union member in good standing to get a job, and against the Union Shop, where the employee must join the Union within a given period after hiring in order to keep his job, but also against preferential hiring where preference is given to Union members in hiring new workers. It was directed also against maintenance of membership -- where all employees who are Union members or who become Union members must remain in the Union for the duration of the labor agreement, and the agency shop (or dues shop) where employees who do not wish to become Union members must nevertheless pay dues to the Union. In other words, the "Right to Work" movement was against all trade unionism.

I stated my opposition to this movement from our pulpit on October 8, 1956.

It was reported in the Cleveland Newspapers and was quoted widely during the campaign. I said:

"Perhaps the various groups who have become so concerned about a free citizen's right to work... could tell us how to ensure the right to work to the over five million unemployed who are able-bodied, competent, and who wish to work and to earn a living for themselves and their families, but who are denied their right to work during recessionary periods in our economy.

The same group of people now clamoring for the theoretic right to work, fought bitterly in 1930 against the enactment of unemployment insurance which has proved such a life-saver in successive periods of recession and which today many responsible people, including the President of the United States, are urging that its benefits be extended.

Even in those desperate years when sixteen million of our people were unemployed and heads of families were selling apples on the street corners in order to earn a few pennies for their families, our unemployment insurance proposal was fought bitterly by the powerful business organizations in Ohio on the grounds that it was un-American, radical, socialistic, and that it rewarded idleness.

Every man in a free society should have the right to work. But every man, once he finds employment, also has the moral duty to join an organization of fellow workers which achieved for him through its organized efforts the favorable conditions he enjoys in his employment and affords him protection for the future. Everyone is morally obligated to share in the responsibilities if they wish to avail themselves of the rewards of collective effort. The theoretic "Right to Work" -- which no one questions -- is qualified by man's moral responsibility to assume the obligations which assure him the very things which he seeks in his employment.

- 5 -Organized labor, of course, is not without its shortcomings. At times it is most unreasonable. But so is management. It has been gratifying to note the courageous and statesmanlike action which responsible leaders of labor have taken in an attempt to clean the house of labor of its grafters and corruptionists. It has been my conviction for many years that no free society and no free economy can long endure in the modern world without a strong organization of its working people. A strong labor movement not only protects workers against exploitation but, at the same time, will save capitalism and free enterprise from those very abuses which ultimately destroy it. " But while it is highly desirable that all workers should belong to a Union and the Union should make every effort to persuade all workers to join it, this is clearly the responsibility of labor, not of management. If management wishes to cooperate in achieving this result -- so much the better. But to force a strike over this issue and to prolong it is unwarranted. Many members of the Guild have since declared that Union security was not a part of the motion to strike which was passed on November thirtieth. The first time the question of Union security was brought to a direct vote of the Guild membership was at the Press Unit Meeting on January 24th. A motion to instruct the negotiators to accept management"s latest offer on the issue -- that is, maintenance of membership -- and to proceed to other issues, actually carried by a narrow vote of ninety-eight to ninety-five. A week later the vote was reversed by a vote of one hundred and thirty-seven to one hundred and twenty. Clearly there was a sharp division of opinion over this issue among Guild members themselves. Many members of the Guild were themselves opposed to the Union Shop and the Agency Shop. They did not favor compulsory membership. Why then

was the strike continued for so long over this one issue, over which there was such sharp division of opinion within the Guild, itself -- an issue on which, by the way, the Guild had finally to capitulate?

It is equally difficult to understand the intransigeant position which was taken by Mr. Seltzer. He maintained that the issue was one of a free press. If employees were forced to join the Guild, then the editorial independence of the newspaper would be jeopardized. But, the Guild's demands were limited to employees in the Commercial Department only -- to those who handle the advertising, the circulation and the business acounts -- not to those in the Editorial Department. The Guild is an industrial Union which years ago joined the C.I.O. It therefore, as a matter of course, includes all employees -- commercial as well as editorial -- in the one Guild. But it does not necessarily follow that compulsory Union membership in the Commercial Department would lead to similar compulsory membership in the Editorial Department.

Granted that there exists the hazard that in a future contract negotiation demands may be made for compulsory Union membership in the Editorial Department as well. But why not face the issue if and when it comes up? And even if the Editorial Department should ever be fully unionized -- and by the way, ninety to ninety-five percent of the employees of editorial departments both of The Press and The Plain Dealer are already members of the Guild -- it does not follow that the Guild would attempt to control the editorial policy of the paper or to dictate to the men who write or edit the news. The constitution of the American Newspaper Guild limits its activities to matters which have to do with wages, hours and working conditions and not with what its members write or think.

Could not Mr. Seltzer have taken a less dogmatic and unyielding position on this issue? Could be not have helped the Guild to solve the problem which was greatly troubling it, namely, the problem of creating a healthier atmosphere in the Commercial Department? The Guild complained of the unfriendly and anti-Union supervisory personnel in the Commercial Department of the Press, of the people whom Mr. Wical called the "straw bosses" "who openly and continually express their contempt for the Guild and all who join it". This, the Guild claims, was the major reason for the present strike.

All workers today are desperately concerned about the security of their jobs. They look upon a strong Union as their sole security. Mr. Seltzer has not found it too difficult to work with ten other Unions in his plant in all of whom membership is compulsory.

There was evidently a great deal of bitterness and acrimony in the months of negotiation which preceded the strike and in the months after the strike was declared. An outsiderdoes not know the why and wherefor of all this rancor and anger. The American newspaper Guild of which the Cleveland Guild is Local No. 1, was actually founded here in Cleveland in 1934. Mr. Louis B. Seltzer, who was then Editor of the Press, was instrumental in founding it. He has been its friend and champion right along — as he has been the friend of organized labor generally. Mr. Seltzer, who is today regarded as the Dean of American Editors, is a progressive and liberal man and a champion of human rights. He is loved and respected by his staff — I say this not only from my personal knowledge and from the testimony of his co-workers, even those who were leaders in the present strike against the Press. Mr. Seltzer is certainly no enemy of labor. Why then did he find himself with a twelve week strike on his hands, a strike which was called by the very Guild which he helped to found and foster?

- 8 -Mr. Seltzer complained bitterly in his City Club debate of treachery, trickery and deceit, of lack of fairness and democracy on the part of the Guild leadership. The Guild strike vote was rushed through. Many of its members had not been notified of the meeting. Thirty percent were absent. At the meeting, a motion to table an immediate strike resolution -- that is, not to take hasty action -was lost by only five votes -- one hundred and eight een to one hundred and thirteen. On the crucial vote -- "Not to return to work without a contract", i.e., to strike -- there was general confusion. No attempt was made to see that only those in good standing voted. No ballots had been prepared. Pieces of paper were torn up and distributed and members scribbled their "Yes" or 'No" on scraps of paper and put them in the box. The result was one hundred and twenty-seven "Yes" and one hundred and five "No". The one hundred and twenty-seven who voted for the strike were only thirty-eight percent of the Press Guild membership. Why was there such a hurry to call a strike? Why was such precipitate action taken? Granted that the Guild contract had expired, the men could still have continued to work while negotiations were going on -- in the sure knowledge that what was finally agreed on would be retroactive. Why did not the very size of the vote against striking indicate to the leadership of the Guild that the strike was not generally popular with the members -- that they should, therefore, go slow, re-study the situation, take a sober second thought. Responsible trade-Union leadership would have done just that. Or must we assume that the leaders believed that the moment was especially propitious -- just before the Christmas holidays, when newspaper business is at its peak -- to force a quick acquiescence on the part of the publishers. If so,

- 9 as events proved, they were grossly and sadly mistaken. Such squeeze tactics are self-defeating and injure the cause of collective bargaining in the long run. I am inclined to believe that there is considerable merit to Mr. Seltzer's contention. All this points up the serious problem of inadequate labor leadership which is greatly disturbing the American people today. Cries of remedial legislation are being heard from many sides, demands to curb the unions and the power of organized labor. New York City, too, has had all of its nine dailies shut down by a strike -the longest strike in that city's newspaper history -- almost as long as ours, and it threatens to be even longer. Every form of mediation, every attempt to settle the strike has failed. The intervention of Mayor and Governor, of the United States Labor Secretary, Mr. Wirtz, even the appointment of a panel of three eminent judges to constitute a Board of Public Accountability, in order to hear witnesses from both sides, have failed to break the deadlock. The panel of impartial judges reported that "The strike was a deliberate design to postpone any negotiation until a time when the publishers would be forced to surrender under the economic pressure of threatened extinction". And the position of the Publishers seems to have been "We can take it longer than you can take it". Collective bargaining thus becomes nothing more than collective bludgeoning. The bargaining table becomes a battle-field, and the only consideration is how long the publishers can take their heavy losses and how long the Union's war-chest can hold out. The guiding principle is no longer reasonable concession and compromise, but surrender. Mr. Bertram Powers, the head of the International Typographical Union, who has been the most truculent of the Union leaders involved, summed up his concept of collective bargaining in these words: "The only thing that counts is muscle. If disputes were settled by reason of justice, there wouldn't be Unions."

The trend to settle industrial disputes not on the basis of reason or justice, but by sheer muscle has become very marked in the activities of certain labor leaders and in the stubbornness and truculence of certain representatives of management. Such negotiators go through the motions of sitting around a bargaining table. They listen to the pleas of mediators -- local, state, national, to citizens' committees and civic leaders -- for days and weeks and months -- and nothing happens. Neither side budges. They are waiting to see who will wear the other down first. As in wrestling or prize-fighting, the object is to flatten or knock out your opponent.

Both sides reject out of hand all forms of arbitration. Arbitration to them is anathema, Kremlin Dictatorship! Only what they are engaged in doing is true democracy at its finest...

In this connection, I wonder why the Cleveland Newspaper Guild came out for arbitration so late in the day -- after the strike had dragged on for nine weeks, and why the publishers of both the Press and Plain Dealer rejected arbitration right along to the very end. When negotiators are deadlocked, when all forms of mediation fail to bring about an agreement -- what else remains but arbitration? Unless either or both parties are willing to fight it out to the bitter end -- where muscle and not reason or justice becomes the final arbiter?

I do not believe that the organized labor movement in our country which has achieved so much for the American working man in the past because what it asked for was just and reasonable -- will now, with its work still unfished, and with many grave problems still confronting the American working man, be content

- 11 to abandon its social idealism and its appeal to justice and reason and the goodwill of the American people and will henceforth rely solely on muscle -- on ruthless force -- to achieve its future objectives. The muscle-man in the American labor Union is the real enemy of unionism. So is the corruptionist and the racketeer. So is the Union agent who provokes a strike solely for the purpose of demonstrating to the rank and file that he is earning his salary, that he is actually worth more because he gets so much more for them, regardless of whether the strike is justified or not, the Union leader who is indifferent to the damage which the strike may cause to the community. What some labor Unions need is a higher type of labor statesmanship. They need more men who will think of labor-management relationship, not in terms of irreconcilable conflict but in terms of cooperation for the common good. A clash and divergence of interests are, of course, inevitable in all labor-management relations, but they need not be of such vehemence as to be mutually destructive -bad for the employee, bad for the employer, bad for the public. Some Unions have in the past happily produced the statesmanlike leadership of which I speak, and the results have been eminently satisfactory to both sides. Before adverse legislation is enacted -- and it is clear that the American people will not indefinitely tolerate the continuing abuse, interruption and dislocation of their accustomed way of life by unscrupulous labor politicians -- before serious antagonisms develop between organized labor, the American people and their government. Unions ought to examine themselves frankly and check on the quality of their leaders, and see whether enlightened and reasonable cooperation with management is not the better way in the long run. And this applies also to management. The well-being of the American working man and his family is to the advantage of a prosperous American economy.

Whatever is unjustly denied the employee does not in the long run accrue to the benefit of the employer. When the employer bargains with his men for a new contract of employment, his aim should be not how to outsmart or outmaneuver them, but how to be just and reasonable.

I am afraid that the Cleveland Newspaper Strike lasted so long because there was too little of reasonableness on either side. There was a measure of justice on both sides. But there was not enough of wisdom and statesmanship on either side. In an industrial dispute, as in all other disputes in our society, wisdom and statesmanship must be the crucial and determining factors. Without them a people perishes.