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Statement on "right-to-work" legislation, 1958.

Why so Many Faiths See Evil in 'Right-to-Work'

This proposed bill is being discussed under the misleading title, 'Right-to-Work Bill.' As one desirous of industrial peace and desirous to aid in the prosperity of my state and of my country, as a friend of the working man, I cannot approve this proposed amendment, which, if it does not outlaw unionism, deals it a death blow. Rather, it seems to me that it should be opposed by men of good will and peace, who reverence the individual dignity of man and the spirit of the Constitution of the United States . . .

MOST REV. EDWIN V. BYRNE

Catholic Archbishop of Santa Fe, N. M.



The 'right-to-work' laws are a virtual conspiracy of the crafty, the ignorant, or the misguided to subvert industrial peace, exploit men's need to work, and deluge the community with industrial irresponsibility. 'Right-to-work' laws do not create jobs; they only victimize the worker and make his organization ineffective.

—REV. DR. WALTER G. MUELDER

Dean, Boston University School of Theology

'Right-to-work' bills would prohibit the union shop and other union security agreements that have two beneficent purposes: (1) protecting employee organizations against efforts by employers to destroy them, and (2) insuring that the costs of a union's activity are shared by all who benefit. Right-to-work laws do not, in fact, guarantee the right to work, as any unemployed worker can testify.

DR. JOACHIM PRINZ

President, American Jewish Congress



The Decision Should Be Left to Agreement ② Through Collective Bargaining ③

NOT ONLY do we evidence Christian concern for those who do not wish to join a union, but also for those who do wish to join and maintain a union. And we are concerned for the freedom of the union or of the employer who may wish to sign a union security contract.

**NATIONAL COUNCIL
OF CHURCHES,
Division of Christian
Life and Work**

While being concerned for these freedoms, we are also aware of the fact that limitations of such freedoms may be required. Limitations upon the right to many kinds of work are fixed on behalf of safety, skill, efficiency, and health.

Wherever a limitation or a restriction of freedom has been set or permitted by law it means that the public has decided that some social value has been selected as having greater merit than the right of a worker to employment on his own terms.

Some element of compulsion is present in almost every association of individuals. All men are confronted from time to time with the necessity of yielding to the interests and welfare of others. They are also, at times, under the moral necessity of resisting those compulsions which threaten to destroy them as free and responsible agents of their own minds and consciences.

THUS, while people do not usually like compulsion in any form, they may accept some degree of it in order to achieve values which cannot be secured without it. They recognize that in any social order the exercise of individual freedom may be self-defeating, and that freedom must of necessity in some circumstances be exercised in terms of group decisions.

People should recognize the tendency of compulsion in any form to become evil in its consequences, and remain

Playing Right into Hands of the Communists

It should be plain for all to see that the desperately sought-for unity of human society cannot be founded on opposition of classes; no more can the right ordering of economic life be left to an unrestricted competition of forces.

**CATHOLIC
COMMITTEE
OF THE SOUTH**

The whole free world longs for peace and justice and charity, and here in Louisiana we are preparing the conditions which can easily lead to economic warfare and bitterness among ourselves. In this way we are playing right into the hands of the Communists, whose principal weapon is hatred.

aware of the fact that only with great difficulty and fine judgment can compulsion be made to serve ideal ends. The question of compulsion is one of the more delicate of moral questions and it has a special bearing on the question of whether membership in a labor union should be made a condition of employment.

IN THE LIGHT of the above considerations and with specific reference to issues currently raised by state "right-to-work" laws . . . It is the opinion of the Division of Christian Life and Work that union membership as a basis of continued employment should be neither required nor forbidden by law; the decision should be left to agreement by management and labor through the process of collective bargaining.

**COMPRISING
35,500,000
MEMBERS IN
30 COMMUNIONS**

Taft Tells How Council Studied RTW for 10 Years

This is what the National Council of Churches did on Right to Work. Our Church and Economic Life Department began in 1948, with a fully representative group of 25 to 40 people present and participating at many sessions. We produced a document condemning Right to Work laws and in 1949 the Federal Council Executive Committee approved it.

Charles P. Taft of Ohio,
Vice President of the
National Council of Churches,
Addressing the American
Baptist Convention, 1958

The industry representatives on our Department approved with only one qualified exception. At that time both the NAM and the AFL favored keeping

the government out of economic conflict.

We revived and improved the statement after the National Council was organized in 1950. It then constituted (and still does) the best analysis of the problem and the best statement of the standards and practices which labor unions should follow. But on the major issue—no law forbidding or compelling union membership as a condition of employment—nearly every industrialist in the discussion ran for cover. Emotion had taken over. In spite of a vigorous whipping up of conservative attendance, the vote in the General Board was 44 to 25 in favor of this principle. The document was then circulated to the Churches by the Division of Christian Life and Work, and I have no hesitation in saying it represents the sentiment of the National Council of Churches.

Are NAM and U.S. Chamber More Sincere 4 Than the Six Bishops of Ohio? 5

**FATHER
WILLIAM J.
SMITH**

*Director,
St. Peter's Institute
of Industrial Relations*

TWICE within the past three years the six bishops of the state of Ohio, each the supreme shepherd in his own diocese, have issued a joint statement publicly proclaiming that a so-called "right-to-work" law is an unwise type of legislation and potentially harmful to the common good.

The Catholic prelates of these dioceses in Ohio, exercising the virtue of prudence (and thereby showing an example of this virtue to the faithful) prescinded from the question of whether or not such laws should be bluntly branded as immoral. They approached the problem from the viewpoint of sound Catholic social teaching, of prudent public policy, of social wisdom, of practical experience in human relations. They came to the conclusion that it was both timely and necessary to warn the faithful in their dioceses that the passage of a "right-to-work" law would be unwise, and detrimental to the common interest of employers and workers in the state of Ohio.

If I were a Catholic in Ohio, this joint statement by the six bishops who represent the Catholic Church in that state, would certainly cause me concern. It would put me on guard.

I WOULD ASK myself some questions. For instance—I might ask myself, "Do the members of the Chamber of Commerce individually or collectively, who are sponsoring such

legislation, have as thorough a knowledge of Catholic social teaching as has my bishop?"

I would ask myself if the National Association of Manufacturers, which has shown itself hostile to the organized labor movement in the past, has as deep and sincere an interest in the workers of Ohio as has my bishop.

FOR MANY years the U.S. Communist Party has unsuccessfully attempted to sever the loyalty of the laity from the hierarchy. They have failed in their diabolic endeavors for the simple reason that nowhere on earth will you find greater respect, reverence and whole-hearted allegiance by the laity for their bishops than in this United States of America.

The six bishops of Ohio, in their role of teacher and guide of the minds and hearts of the faithful, have spoken out on a specific issue. Without doubt, they intended their words of warning to be taken seriously by all the faithful in their respective dioceses. If I were a Catholic in Ohio I would listen to them. I would neither give comfort to the communists by a dissent from their viewpoint, nor solace to the sponsors of such a law by lending it the slightest support.



Real Menace Is in Restricting Freedom

UNDER PRESENT federal legislation, it would appear that the right to work is a general right, not to be denied to men in the aggregate, but the right to work in a specific industrial plant or business can be subject to special conditions. This is simply to assert what has long been true in the United States, namely that man has the right and the duty to work for his livelihood. However, the conditions and terms under which he will work are subject to general social laws of health and welfare as well as rules adopted by any particular industry as a condition of employment.

It now appears that certain states by means of "right-to-work laws" would inject further restrictions by law. Such states would forbid union maintenance agreements even when mutually satisfactory to management and labor.

Such laws are mis-called "right-to-work laws" since they do not oblige anyone to give an individual a job. Their real menace

lies, however, in denying by law the possibility of increasing the quality of individual freedom.

We believe that the role of the state is that of regulation so that individuals may have the maximum freedom of choice consistent with the welfare of the group, while groups may have the maximum freedom for the group action consistent with the welfare of the nation. Therefore, we hold "that union membership as a basis of continued employment should be left to agreement by management and labor through the process of collective bargaining."

However, it must be recognized that the limitation of any individual's right to freely seek employment when such power of limitation is vested in a group, places upon that group and its leaders a high degree of moral responsibility. They are only temporary trustees of rights that rest ultimately in the individual.

THE BOARD OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS OF THE METHODIST CHURCH

Protestant, Catholic, ⁵⁸ ¹⁹ Jewish Clergy Expose 'Right-to-Work'

We must not be misled by the phrase 'Right-to-work' into thinking that any law or any legislation can guarantee a man's job or make a new job for him. Actually this slogan has been often used to disguise an attack upon the trade unions.

Unions are voluntary associations of workers who band together to insure proper conditions at their common place of employment. Such associations, and the agreements to which they come with management — whether 'open shop' or 'union shop'—should not be unfairly restricted by these so-called 'Right to Work' laws.

VERY REV. FRANCIS B. SAYRE, JR.

Episcopal Dean, Washington Cathedral



Right-to-work legislation, in our opinion, is a misnomer whose purpose is to camouflage an attempt to undermine and weaken responsible democratic unionism. Experience has shown that under the guise of freedom of decision for each individual, the concept of collective bargaining is destroyed. Honest, democratic and clean labor unionism is essential for American democracy.

RABBI SOLOMON J. SHARFMAN

President, Rabbinical Council of America



It is insincere because, while it pretends to guarantee the right to work, it actually frustrates that right, in effect exposing labor to lose security, a decent standard of living, and humane working conditions. It makes a mockery of the Constitutional right to organize for the common good and welfare. It invites continuing and recurring social strife and discontent. In a word, it is unfair and unsocial class legislation contrary to the common good. . . .

MOST REV. JOSEPH F. RUMMEL

Catholic Archbishop of New Orleans



Actually, a Sanctimonious Subterfuge Being Foisted on the Public

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GREEDY and undemocratic powers that maintained the 12-hour day and, by every device from company housing to depressed wages sought to resist the introduction of democracy into the economic order, are among those who today sponsor these "Right-to-Work" laws. The public is being deceived by the machinations of these

stupid men who misrepresent the wise and far-seeing leaders of contemporary business who long since have seen the wisdom of dealing with organized labor, of meeting at the bargaining table, and of using the mind instead of the fist to reconcile differences.

Americans believe in the right to work.

They resent the parasite, and see work as an obligation. But just as the Communist deliberately misuses such worthy terms as "peace", "democracy", and "justice", so, too, clever, crafty and highly paid public relations experts have designated these endeavors to weaken labor as "Right to Work" laws. . . . Actually, a sanctimonious subterfuge is being foisted upon the public. . . .

The most significant progress has been made in industrial relations where the workers belong to the union and the union, through its representatives, meets management, through its representatives, and together they think out the problems that should not be fought out.

WE METHODIST ministers belong to an Annual Conference. Agreement has been reached in the democratic General Conference of the Church, where our laws are passed, concerning membership in an Annual Conference. All ministers

Real Purpose—to Weaken Labor

Naturally there are dangers in the bigness of big labor and big business. But all the dangers are aggravated by destroying the balance and making labor weaker in comparison with management. The real purpose of the so-called right-to-work laws is to accomplish this weakening of labor under the guise of preserving or restoring 'individual liberties.'

REV. DR. REINHOLD NIEBUHR
Union Theological Seminary



who are to be appointed to our churches by a bishop must belong to the Annual Conference. The General Conference determines the educational qualifications of our ministers. The Annual Conference votes upon the admission of members to the Conference and insists that certain standards shall be maintained.

The effect of a law similar to the "right to work" laws in Methodism would mean simply that any individual who wanted to serve in one of our churches might do so, if the church wanted to employ him. Before very long, our standards would be gone and the whole responsible system based upon law would break down.

The doctors have their medical societies and maintain their standards. A "right to work" law carried out in the medical profession would mean that, subject to state law, any doctor, no matter what school he graduated from or whether he graduated from any school, might go out and practice medicine. It would be solely up to the person who wished to employ him.

Lawyers who have their bar associations may well ponder these "right-to-work" laws.

Current exposure of corruption in some unions has been seized upon by those who would destroy all unions to foster "right-to-work" laws. The high standards of integrity and the democratic practices of the great unions of this nation are not known to large numbers of people, who think of all labor as led by corrupt tyrants.

Yesterday, the great insurance companies were under investigation in New York. The makers of munitions were investigated, so too the powerful financial agencies of the country. There was much that was discovered that needed proper control. No one is objecting to an investigation of corruption in the labor movement or anywhere else. There are practices that are not only immoral but ought to be criminal.

THE "RIGHT TO WORK" laws have nothing to do with the question of corruption in business or in labor. They are a dangerous proposal, conceived in hypocrisy, and proclaimed in Pharisaic deceit. The forward-looking business men of America, who have long since recognized the wisdom of the organization of labor and the propriety of collective bargaining, should speak with single voice to strike down this pretense.



**BISHOP
G. BROMLEY
OXNAM**

*President,
Council of Bishops
of the Methodist Church*

Same People Clamoring for Right-to-Work Fought Unemployment Insurance

**RABBI
ABBA HILLEL
SILVER**

*The Temple
Cleveland*

PERHAPS the various groups who have become so concerned about a free citizen's right to work . . . could tell us how to insure the right to work for the over five million unemployed who are able-bodied, competent and who wish to earn a living for themselves and their families, and 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, in 1930 fought bitterly in this state against the enactment of unemployment insurance which has proven such a lifesaver in successive periods of recession and which today many responsible people, in-

cluding the President of the United States, are urging benefits be extended.

Even in those desperate years when 16,000,000 of our people were unemployed and heads of families were selling apples on the street corners in order to earn a few pennies for bread 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.

I assume that it is the same people who are today seeking to destroy the effectiveness of organized labor in Ohio through a misleading device and formula of the so-called 'right-to-work' amendment.

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

A Camouflage, a Gimmick to Weaken Unionism

The Rabbinical Council of America recognizes the Right-to-Work legislation as a misnomer and beholds such legislation as a camouflage and a 'gimmick' to weaken and undermine responsible, democratic Unionism.

Were 'Right-To-Work Legislation' enacted, the non-Union member, working side by side with his union-fellow-worker, would get the same pay, the same working conditions, and would use the same grievance apparatus to correct job injustices. 'R.T.W.L.' makes the non-union worker a moral parasite in a democratic labor force.

**RABBINICAL
COUNCIL
OF AMERICA**

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 assures him the very things which he seeks in his employment.

Organized labor, of course, is not without its shortcomings. At times they are 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.

OF THIS I am persuaded: 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.



Not in the Full Interest of All the People

The proposed amendment is not in the full interest of all the people and is being misrepresented in its intent for it seeks neither to recognize nor guarantee the human right to gainful employment.

The true purpose of the proposed amendment seems directed toward the unhealthful limitation of labor's power to bargain for the fruits of its work and to ultimately destroy organized labor as a democratic force in the American economy.

The Colorado Congregational convention records itself as being opposed to the so-called right-to-work amendment since the amendment is contrary to the best interest of the employees, employers and the whole people of Colorado.

**COLORADO
CONGREGATIONAL
CONVENTION**