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"Right-to-Work" Laws; Requests

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LETTERS

“Right-to-Work” Laws

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

To the Editor:

Mr. Fitzpatrick in his recent second article in support of compulsory union membership has tried again to make his case with a few selected arguments.¹ Unfortunately, the issues involved in the right to work and in compulsory union membership are too broad and too involved to permit an adequate discussion in a few pages. An adequate consideration of the problem requires at the least a careful review of: the implications of compulsory union membership to unions, to workers, to employers, and to the public; the internal characteristics of unions, including the problems of totalitarian control, racketeering in and by unions, and communist domination of unions; and the problems and implications inherent in making unions into ill-defined *les états dans l'état*.

Mr. Fitzpatrick refers approvingly to the “compulsory collective bargain.” Yet it is apparent at once, since the exclusive agent negotiates employment terms applicable to all members of the bargaining unit, that this destroys one of our most important freedoms: freedom of contract. But Congress did not provide that all members of the bargaining unit must have full and equal participation in all of the affairs of the bargaining agent, including the “government” of the bargaining agent, approval of the terms of

the employment contract, and so on. Therefore not only was freedom of contract destroyed but also a situation was created in which workers might not have any part whatever even in the collective determination of the terms of the employment contract. Thus the principals (workers) in the bargaining relationship are made ancillary to the agent (union).

Mr. Fitzpatrick's attempt to suggest that the union is like a government of the bargaining unit and his suggestion that “the remedy of dissidents is, as in any other ‘perfect’ representative society, to seek to become a majority and change or oust the government body”² does little but confuse the issues. Unions under the law are more nearly like political parties than like governments. Presumably the electorate may “turn the rascals out” at will. Unfortunately, under compulsory union membership there is a pronounced tendency to equate the union with government thus tending to establish a *de facto* one-party state situation. Moreover, as Mr. Fitzpatrick certainly knows very well,³ the problem is not, as he would seem to imply, merely a matter of this or that faction seeking a majority. Rather, compulsory union membership is a device which aids in maintaining minority control over the majority.

Finally, we must note that the issue is far more than the question of a “tax” levied on all members of the bargaining unit. Unions demand, and secure, compulsory member-

¹ Fitzpatrick, *Morality of Right-to-Work Laws: Additional Comments*, 2 CATHOLIC LAWYER 308 (1956).

² 2 *id.*, at 309.

³ See FITZPATRICK, UNDERSTANDING LABOR (1945).

ship of the workers. Unions are economic, political, and social institutions. Workers, through their coerced membership and dues, frequently are forced to support various political, reform and other programs of the union — programs which may be, and often are, in opposition to fundamental beliefs of the worker. Mr. Fitzpatrick cannot dispose of the problem by saying in effect that the whole matter is merely one of levying a pro rata "tax" on men to cover the costs of collective bargaining. The union is far more than a collective bargaining agent, which is but one aspect of a many-sided problem.

James R. Morris

Requests

TRINIDAD, B.W.I.

To the Editor:

I write to ask if you would give us as a Christmas Gift a free copy of your publication for Christmas and 1957.

The Catholic Evidence Guild, the official lay arm of Catholic Action in the Archdiocese of Port-of-Spain for the public advocacy of the Faith over the Radio and Lecture platform, and in the secular press (apart altogether from our Study and Action medium) feels the need of a good periodical reference library absolutely necessary for its work. Articles, etc. which appear from time to time in your publication are invaluable to us.

We are a completely voluntary organization conducting weekly radio programmes, delivering anything up to 250 lectures a year throughout the island, almost daily writing for the press.

We trust you will appreciate how difficult it is to come by funds in a missionary area such as ours, for the work we have in hand.

We beg you, therefore, to consider favourably our cause.

Rev. Fr. C. M. Leahy, O.P.

Moderator

Catholic Evidence Guild

CULION LEPER COLONY
PALAWAN, PHILIPPINES

To the Editor:

Allow me to tell you that I am the Sergeant of Police in the Culion Leper Colony, Philippines, and that I have a wife here who is also suffering from leprosy like me. We have here two children, both girls, but they are not afflicted with the sickness we have. My compensation as police sergeant is only ₱60.00 (or \$30.00) a month and, you know, that with such puny compensation, I find it hard to make both ends meet. Nevertheless, at present I am studying law in U.S.A. through correspondence, for, I believe, I can be a good peace officer with the knowledge of law.

And knowing that you have a heart that is always ready to lend a helping hand to an unfortunate leper who has still the ambition to be useful to himself, to his neighbors, and to the public, I am therefore appealing to you for a Free Subscription of your magazine THE CATHOLIC LAWYER as a Christmas gift.

Thanking you in anticipation and wishing you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, I am,

Sofronio I. Sayson

The above letters are typical of requests which have been received from all parts of the world. Readers are invited to contribute gift subscriptions for worthy recipients to be nominated by the Editor.