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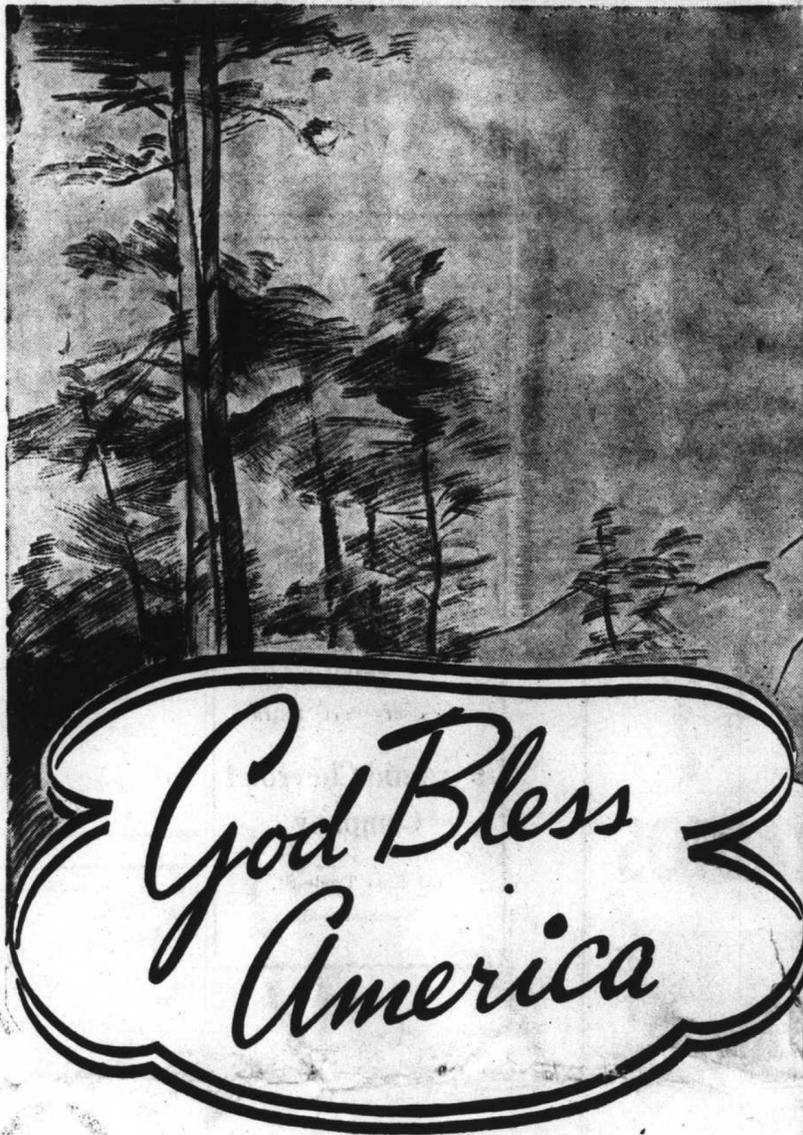
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AND HE HAS blessed our country . . . but His benediction imposes upon each and every one of us the sacred duty of defending every priceless heritage that we have been granted. With so great a portion of humanity inured to calamity and injustice, let each American silently consecrate himself and his conscience to the preservation of every American ideal . . . ideals that are more precious today than ever before.

Yes, we still can have faith in man's higher destiny even though nations, once the homes of great cultures, crash back into abject slavery. There can still be hope though elsewhere fearful death-dealing machines are thrust into

the hands of children, though churches are barricaded, books destroyed, though millions of families are scattered to the four winds.

These things have not happened here and with His continued aid and guidance, we will see that they shall not happen here.

Among His many graces showered on us is the charter of American liberty. We are proud to be part of that first line of defense of American liberties . . . to always stand militantly at the side of every true American against the inroads of doctrines seeking to destroy freedom of speech, freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of religious worship and freedom of the press.

President Green's 1940 Labor Day Message

By WILLIAM GREEN

President, American Federation of Labor

In these moving times when that which gives value to our lives and civilization lies in the balance, the observance of Labor Day takes on a new solemnity and a new obligation. Labor Day is in Labor's economic world what Independence Day is in our political life. Labor Day typifies the status which Labor has secured through union organization. For the wage earner finding the union means finding the way to those industrial rights which are the basis for justice and freedom in that important part of life spent in earning a livelihood. We know that if we exercise political freedom we must also have economic freedom. The trade union is Labor's economic declaration of independence.

The union assures that basic right—representation. Through representation the union can present its views, influence decisions, and suggest ways and means for dealing with problems. The right to representation, whether in law courts, in political bodies, in special groups or in decisions on work terms and standards, is the provision essential to individual initiative and feeling of justice and self-reliance. Representation implies rights and status and lays the foundations for a continuous program for betterment.

Representatives must be designated by those represented. This alone can give them authority to act.

Free trade unions and democratic institutions are inseparable and grow from the same ideals of liberty.

Liberty cannot be given to any individual, group or nation. It must be achieved and maintained by those concerned. This implies responsibility and discipline on the part of those who are members and officials of free organizations as well as those who constitute a democratic people. We can be sure of preserving our rights only as we exercise them wisely and resist encroachments on them.

By common consent priority has now been granted to defense production. One and all agree that we can fight a revolution of destruction only with force. The keys to defense equipment are adequate air force, mechanized troops and ships. Our problem is to get equipment with the speed necessitated by the imminent danger.

Manufacturers and producers planning to undertake production required for our defense program, have been united on two demands: First, that their industries should be allowed to write off the cost of plant expansion for defense production within five years with allowances for depreciation and obsolescence; and secondly, the elimination of restrictions upon hours of

work because of an alleged labor shortage. In the case of munitions the Government is planning to build the plants and lease them to the producing companies.

In accord with this background of protection for manufacturers against undue costs, are legal regulations to pay workers overtime in excess of the maximum standard of 40 hours provided by the Walsh-Healey Act and 42 hours in the Fair Labor Standards Act. The regulation does not prohibit longer hours but insures workers against long hours at undue expense to them.

On Labor Day 1940 we can rejoice in progress even during a period of depression and conflict. Our union membership is at an all-time peak. Employed workers have made progress despite the depression. Approximately 700,000 union workers have gained the 30-hour week while the average work week for all dropped from 50 to 40; hourly earnings increased 20 per cent in dollars and 45 per cent in purchasing power. But progress for the employed is offset by the number unemployed who are denied places to earn a living in our business structure. When we learn that during these decades productivity has increased 50 per cent, we realize that upon a return to normal conditions the 30-hour week must be established for all and that industries must be expanded to capacity to provide work opportunities for all and the materials for higher standards of living for all. As labor costs per unit of output have decreased 25 per cent, wage increases could without difficulty much more nearly approximate the increase in productivity. Sustaining purchasing power in the hands of workers families is necessary to maintain production at capacity. And this is the basic step in solving unemployment which is our major and most imperative problem blocking the way to prosperity in peace and unity for national defense.

Upon the organized trade union movement rests the responsibility for maintaining labor standards for the maintenance of progress for labor and prosperity for the whole nation. It is our duty and our mission to maintain standards as our economic and social service, and to preserve our free trade unions as an organization necessary to government and justice in industry and to democracy in our political government.

The labor movement in the United States, the oldest labor movement of the Western Hemisphere, has a responsibility for helping to preserve free unions in the New World. Without free unions democracy and liberty cannot exist. This solemn duty rests upon the individual members of all unions. Labor Day 1940 should constitute a day of rededication and planning to carry out this high purpose.

Sec.-Treas. Meany's 1940 Labor Day Message

By GEORGE MEANY

Secretary-Treasurer American Federation of Labor

The strength of the American labor movement, as represented by the American Federation of Labor, is greater on this Labor Day of 1940 than it has ever been. The actual paid membership of our organization is today more than 4,300,000, as compared with a membership of only a few thousands in the year of the first Labor Day celebration, back in 1882.

During the last year the labor movement has successfully continued to carry on its efforts to achieve a better day for the wage-earners of our great country.

Despite the activities of anti-labor forces designed to impair the effectiveness of trade-union effort, the American Federation of Labor has pressed forward as ever, organizing, bargaining, counseling, consistently pushing the American standard of living higher and higher.

During the year the organizations affiliated with the American Federation of Labor have obtained thousands of contracts calling for good wages and decent, American working conditions. In the legislative field, labor has also registered gains since we last celebrated Labor Day, although advances in legislation have been considerably fewer than in recent years.

Those who sought to destroy the American Federation of Labor by setting up a dual organization have encountered a rapidly growing revulsion toward their tactics on the part of all American workers—those still unorganized as well as those already in the labor movement and enjoying the manifold benefits of organization.

Recently this mounting revulsion to those responsible for the continuance of the division in organized labor took concrete form in the reaffiliation of one of the largest international unions, the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union, thus bringing back into the American Federation of Labor a total of 250,000 workers.

This action on the part of the Garment Workers has re-awakened the hope that the day is not far distant when all labor in America will be reunited in a strong, vigorous movement under the banner of the American Federation of Labor. Experience has taught us that unity is desirable. Present-day conditions throughout the world indicate that unity of labor in America is imperative. I hope and trust that unity will be achieved before another Labor Day rolls around.

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