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MEMO from COPE

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COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL EDUCATION, AFL-CIO
815 16TH STREET, N.W., WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006

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Curious Case of 'Right to Work' Committee

Poorer It Does, Richer It Gets

You've got to hand it to the National Right to Work Committee: It knows how to fasten on to new issues to pump fresh life into its own operation. It roots around for them like a pig sniffing for truffles.

And it has found one: Campaign reform (see add, Page 3). It's a matter of survival. NRTWC will milk the issue to milk its contributors to keep itself going.

The committee, whose principal purpose is to prod states into passing open shop laws, has suffered through a long drought. In terms of productive crops, NRTWC has been a real dust bowl. The last state to enact RTW was Wyoming back in 1963.

In all, 19 states have the law on the books, despite the fact it's been 70 years since the idea started making the rounds and 19 since NRTWC was launched under the chairmanship of a John Bircher.

The failure of NRTWC in its own ball park is abject. At the time it formed in 1955, 18 states already had open shop laws. In 1958, Kansas was added to the list, in 1963 Wyoming. Between times, in 1961, Indiana repealed its law. So in nearly two full decades, the committee has seen a total of one state added to the 18 where laws existed at the time of its founding.

In the same period, it has endured some 60 failures—by referendum, by legislative rejection, by state constitutional convention turn-down. The latest occurred within the past month in New Hampshire, where the constitutional convention nixed a try to insert RTW.

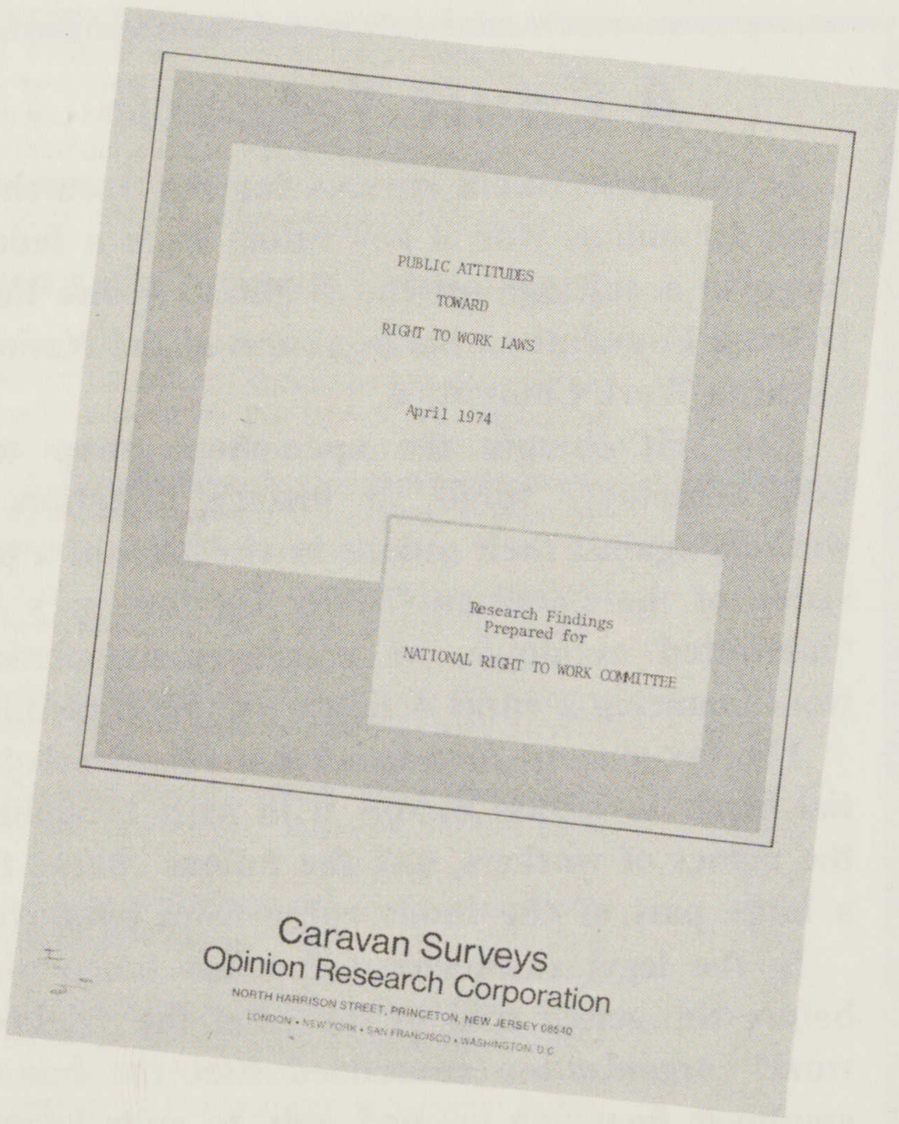
With a record like that, most institutions would, deservedly, sink into oblivion. But the NRTWC hangs in there like a cat with nine lives. Indeed, despite its bleak performance, it appears to have attracted a truly dedicated and incurably optimistic band of backers among whom hope springs eternal, if funding is indicative.

The worse NRTWC does, the more money it seems to get. In a complete reversal of the standard success story, for NRTWC at least, out of failure comes fortune.

In 1969, the committee collected total income of $841,592. By 1972, it jumped to $1,073,807, a 25 percent increase. In the four years 1969-1972 (1973 figures not yet available), NRTWC pulled in $3,800,644.

In addition to this funding, a spin-off of NRTWC, the Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation—which unsuccessfully masterminded a series of anti-union

(Continued on Page 2)


PUBLIC ATTITUDES
TOWARD
RIGHT TO WORK LAWS

April 1974

Research Findings
Prepared for
NATIONAL RIGHT TO WORK COMMITTEE

Caravan Surveys
Opinion Research Corporation
NORTH HARRISON STREET, PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY 08540
LONDON • NEW YORK • SAN FRANCISCO • WASHINGTON, D.C.

OPEN-SHOPPERS shelled out $6,500 for this poll, $5,043 to announce results in full-page newspaper ad (see Page 3), all to reach Congress with their version of "campaign reform," a new peg for right-to-workers to hang fund appeals on.